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# The Grand Experiment: Jerome Dwight Davis and the Young Men's Christian Association's War Prisoner Aid Sports Programing for German POWs in Canadian Camps During World War Two

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Graduate Program in Kinesiology  
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## Abstract

Jerome Davis, head of the Young Men's Christian Association War Prisoner Aid program, was a devout Congregationalist dedicated to providing for the basic sport and recreation endeavours of German Prisoners of War interned in Canadian POW camps during the Second World War. Having worked with German Prisoners of War in Russia during the First World War, Davis firmly believed that WWII Allies the world over needed to change their generally antagonistic point of view towards German POWs, indeed, a point of view that required "moral revisionism." Davis believed that the vilification and demeaning status of German POWs was not only wrong, but short-sighted and counterproductive. Davis' family upbringing reflected a substantial Congregational bearing. His service in WW II continued to reflect the same philosophical/religious principles: principles of religious morality and practical theology that followed three basic steps: (1) the concern for and practical reasoning towards POW life and treatment; (2) the organization and administration needed in the mass provision of sporting goods; and (3) a theological deduction based upon scriptures that facilitated his sporting mission. To Davis, Christ's commands: "do unto others" and "to the least of my people," underscored his thought and practice. Salvation of German POW souls was a secondary goal subservient to providing boredom relief, escape prevention, and dissolving hard-line Nazi mistrust of religious organizations in general. Davis' desire to provide sport equipment and help in sport programming organization for German POWs was a reflection of his life's direction and commitment to "service." Jerome Davis desired to reach German POWs through sport and Christian love. Stark statistics conveyed within this dissertation tell merely half of Davis' story. From 1939-1943 Davis' energy, vigor, and commitment to cause, communicated a deeper understanding as to why the Canadian YMCA War Prisoner Aid program proved a success

## Keywords

Jerome Dwight Davis, Jerome Dean Davis, Young Men's Christian Association, YMCA, World Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations, World Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations War Prisoner Aid, Canadian Committee for YMCA War Prisoner Aid, War Prisoner Aid, Religion, belief, morality, practical theology.

## Summary

Jerome Davis, head of the Young Men's Christian Association War Prisoner Aid program, was a devout Congregationalist Christian who dedicated his life to providing for the basic sport and endeavours of German Prisoners of War interned in Canadian during the Second World War. Davis had previously worked with German Prisoners of War in Russia during the First World War. Davis believed that WWII Citizens the world over, needed to change their general opposed point of view of German POWs. Davis believed that civilians need to cultivate a point of view that counteracted hostile feelings towards German POWs (moral Revisionism). Davis believed that the vilification of German POWs was wrong, short-sighted and counterproductive to the war efforts of the YMCA. Davis' service in WWII reflect the following philosophical/religious principles: (1) cultivating concern for and practical reasoning towards POW treatment; (2) the organization needed in the provision of sporting goods; and (3) Christian charitable principles, based upon scriptures, that facilitated his sporting mission. To Davis, Christ's commands: "do unto others" and "to the least of my people," underscored his thought and practice. Salvation of German POW souls was a secondary goal to providing boredom relief, escape prevention, and dissolving Nazi mistrust of religious organizations. Davis' desire to provide sport equipment and help in sport programming organization for German POWs was a reflection of his life's direction and commitment. Jerome Davis desired to reach German POWs through sport and Christian love. Stark statistics conveyed within this dissertation tell merely half of Davis' story. From 1939-1943 Davis' energy, vigor, and commitment to cause, communicated a deeper understanding as to why the Canadian YMCA War Prisoner Aid program proved a success.

Dedication

For

Candace, Ryan and Evelyn Kraushaar

and for

The Memory of Jerome Davis and Canadian YMCA War Prisoner Aid

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### **List of Abbreviations**

YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association)

WPA (War Prisoner Aid)



# **The Grand Experiment**

## **Introduction**

In a House of Commons session convened on Thursday, 20 June 1940, under the government of Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King, it was voted to accept the responsibility of receiving and interning enemy aliens and WWII German prisoners of war (POWs) previously incarcerated in Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> The initiative was aimed at preventing the presence in England of a considerable number of prospective soldiers who could become combatants for further Nazi military service should Britain fall into enemy hands. Canada, as a signatory to the 1929 Geneva Convention, was compelled to abide by strict rules governing the treatment of the newly arrived POWs.

The Geneva Convention requirements of Prisoner of War Treatment, updated and ratified in 1933,<sup>2</sup> dictated the treatment of officers and non-officers, and their subsequent separation into different camp locations. The Geneva Convention called for mandatory leisure activity opportunities in POW life.<sup>3</sup> Having accepted the responsibility of interning German POWs in Canada,<sup>4</sup> government authorities embarked on a seven-year plan within which the treatment of prisoners was to take place. However, neither the Canadian government nor the Red Cross were prepared or capable of facilitating vast amounts of supplies or organizational schemes for recreational programming.<sup>5</sup> Quick to aid the government in recreational and athletic endeavors for POWs was the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Association's War Prisoners Aid. It soon became the desire and responsibility of the politically neutral Young men's Christian Associations (YMCAs)<sup>6</sup> to fulfill the duties of making prisoners lives more

comfortable, even beyond the minimum comforts required by the terms of the Geneva Convention.

International and national Young Men's Christian Association involvement within military structures (foreign or domestic) was not a new occurrence. In fact, the national YMCA of Canada participated in the second Boer War by sending human and supply resources to South Africa in 1899.<sup>7</sup> The American and Canadian International YMCAs sent secretaries/managers<sup>8</sup> to work with the Japanese military in Manchuria during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904.<sup>9</sup> The American YMCA was actively involved with the military in both the American Civil War of 1861-1865 and the Spanish American War of 1898.<sup>10</sup> Quebec and Ontario Provincial YMCA committees worked in Army camps in 1859.<sup>11</sup> By the time Canada entered the Second World War on Sunday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1939, International and local Canadian YMCAs were ready, willing, and prepared to aid prisoners of war.

The North American War Prisoners Aid, under the auspice of the World Alliance of The Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCAs) attempted to solve the Canadian Government's problem of meeting the requirements of the Geneva Convention's POW statutes by instituting a program in which the YMCA "trie[d] to provide behind the barbed wire all the activities that usually belong to campus life, educational, musical, athletic, recreational and religious."<sup>12</sup> This programming, popularly known as the "Campus Life" program, was a welcomed partial distraction solution combatting boredom, "loneliness and depression" in young men, indeed a response to the "direct appeal to the ...YMCA, and its distinctive purpose to promote the highest welfare of young men."<sup>13</sup> The success of Campus Life's athletic programming is of specific importance. Athletic programming was the hallmark of YMCA-sponsored activities. Athletic programming by the YMCA deployed an array of benefits to POWs. Athletics could relieve

boredom and loneliness by fostering team play and comradery. Athletics could help reduce pent-up male aggression and violence in a controlled environment. Lastly, but certainly what many believed to be most important, YMCA-sponsored POW athletics could hopefully help POWs “recognize the spirit of Christian charity,” and by doing so could essentially capture and save souls.<sup>14</sup>

## **Statement of Purpose**

The intent of this study is to provide an in-depth explanation of POW camp sporting endeavours and programming in Canada, as seen through the ecumenical foundations of both the creator of the Campus Life Program, Jerome Davis, and the Young Men’s Christian Associations from 1940 through 1946. With respect to athletics for POWs through a Christian endeavour lens, such a topic has yet to be directly studied in any depth. More particularly, Canadian Young Men’s Christian Associations have yet to be studied with regard to POW aid programming. By examining religiously-influenced YMCA sport programming, it is hoped that this study can provide a different narrative of the Canadian experience as a WWII POW-detaining power.

## **Justification/Rationale**

While histories are vast in the story of German POWs in Canada from 1940 to 1946, not one treats the direct influence that the YMCA had on sport programming for POW’s. Authors such as Carter,<sup>15</sup> Auger,<sup>16</sup> Melady,<sup>17</sup> Jones,<sup>18</sup> and Zimmerman,<sup>19</sup> all have accomplished reliable jobs of describing POW life in Canada during the Second World War. However, not one, has specifically focused on the sporting life of POWs.

There are internal and external influences that can and will affect this study. One internal factor to the study missing completely in the literature, is a focus on the head inspector of all Canadian POW camps: Jerome Dwight Davis. A deeper investigation into Davis’ life is

necessary in order to understand Davis' development of "The Campus Life Program,"<sup>20</sup> specifically designed to ward off the dreaded "Barbed Wire Disease."<sup>21</sup> The particular examination of Davis and his beliefs has yet to be mentioned in any reference material relating to him and the work he accomplished for the International YMCAs.

The substance or deeper look at Davis and the YMCA's specific focus on sport is underscored by the amount of unexamined archive material. Foremost of such resources are the personal notes and papers of the Director of the Campus Life initiative, Jerome Davis.<sup>22</sup> Further research on both Davis' work with YMCA War Prisoner Aid and POW camp athletics can also be found at the University of Toronto's Hermann Boeschstein Fonds collection of Reports on Work in Canadian Internment Camps,<sup>23</sup> The Esplanade Medicine Hat Archives,<sup>24</sup> The Kautz Family Archives at the University of Minnesota,<sup>25</sup> The Roosevelt Institute at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library,<sup>26</sup> The Canadian National Archives, and the Archives of the Canadian War Museum. These archives though vast have never been examined from the perspective of Davis' goals, religious purposes, or his reasoning for producing sport programming for POWs

Davis' own hand-written notes provide a deeper look into his personal reasoning, an extension beyond his professional reports submitted to the Committee for Canadian of the War Prisoner's Aid of the YMCA in Toronto,<sup>27</sup> the New York International YMCA headquarters, the World Committee of YMCAs in Geneva, Switzerland, and the Ottawa Internment Operations Office of the Department of Defence.<sup>28</sup>

Canadian newspapers regionally based within populations close to POW camps were left out of this study for specific reasoning. The Canadian government had strict rules regarding reporting on POWs and the camps in which they were situated, and it was not until 1945 that the Canadian government allowed a newspaper to present a small series of articles on the Canadian



POW camps be published, explaining some of the secrecy surrounding Canadian POW operations.<sup>29</sup> The majority of articles featuring any mention of POWs were either military warnings about loitering around the fences to talk to POWs, or mentions of escapees.

All these resources provide valuable evidence as to whether Davis was too determined in his programming, or more likely the right man, at the right time, for such an ambitious project of YMCA War Prisoner Aid in Canada.

## **Method**

This dissertation, although historiographical at base, approaches the topic of Jerome Davis and YMCA War Prisoner Aid in Canada through three academic approaches: biographical, historical, and theological. As such Chapter two will be a short biography of Davis' life. The YMCA today is a secular institution, the YMCA of the past was decidedly religious. Based upon devotion to the scriptures and evangelical morality, the YMCA thrived from the outset in obtaining its religious conversion/promotion goals and expanding beyond its expectations. The YMCA from its inception, and its almost immediate development of the "Paris Basis" in 1855,<sup>30</sup> placed within its doctrinal beliefs the understanding of a Christian trinitarian belief in God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost/Spirit.<sup>31</sup> Part of the YMCA's success was its approval for each YMCA's individualized governance, together with an adaptational attitude towards limitations placed on a small but rigid confessional consideration.<sup>32</sup> Knowledge of YMCA practical theology (the day to day ecumenical system of belief) must be employed as a research method applied to this study. Johannes Van der Ven (professor of empirical theology at Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands) claims that "practical theology is not a kind of pastoral theology,"<sup>33</sup> In his publications he examines topics of human rights and their interaction with religious values, the

formation of morality and the formation of a moral self. Therefore, Van der Ven's designed framework for research to determine the development of religious morality in a strictly empirical historical context will inform my own examination of Davis' beliefs for POWs and sport, as Davis' firm view regarding the provision of sport programming for POWs came directly from the belief in scripture and ecumenical minimalism. To Aid rather than convert: to do unto others, or for the least of God's people.

Van der Ven's framework for the construction of religious morality as practical theology consists of five steps: (1) development of a theological problem, or theologically-based goal; (2) a theological induction of the problem; (3) a theological deduction of the problem; (4) empirical theological examination of the evidence; and (5) a theological evaluation of the evidence.<sup>34</sup> In the context of Davis and POW sport this framework translates to; (1) the concern and theological reasoning of receiving POWs and how to treat them; (2) the theological reasoning for the mass provision of sporting goods and programming; and (3) the theological deduction, based upon scriptures, of Christ commanding such as "do unto others" and "to the least of my people" as well as the belief that "if sports bodies are divinely graced [as made in God's image], they may be able to open our eyes and reveal God...[or] how this might reflect God's glory."<sup>35</sup> The goal is to determine whether or not Davis agreed with or followed these ideals through each chapter of evidence. Step four confronts theological empirical evidence<sup>36</sup> such as Davis' official reports, his use of biblical ideals, and scripture as slogans for his work. And lastly, step five offers a theological-based evaluation of the evidence provided (whether Davis believed he had done his best and fulfilled his Christian commitment to the YMCA War Prisoner Aid Program). Van der Ven's framework can be rationalized to fit the purpose of this study as it can organize and

employ a religious value-based qualitative analysis of Davis and his objectives not yet studied in the context of POWs and Davis' belief in the importance of sport.

Qualitative evidence will be used throughout the examination of Davis' work. Official reports and hand-written notes are qualitative sources that provide a glimpse into Davis as both an individual and a YMCA representative. Further qualitative evidence will hopefully be found in his personal correspondence found at the Roosevelt Institute. Quantitative evidence also arises from evidentiary reports, as well as Canadian National Archives data, collection of commander camp reports, and YMCA-listed gift and supply donations.

## **Limitations**

As a practicing Calvinist Christian<sup>37</sup>, my position on Davis and his theological beliefs regarding POWs can be seen as a personal theological perspective, one that admittedly presents a somewhat limiting perspective. While the same conclusions I make may be reached by non-Calvinist researchers, it is in fact my beliefs that prompted this very study. I tend to believe Davis' viewpoint of POW aid work, was in fact, practical theology (Davis' day to day ecumenical system of belief). His firm views as regarding the provision of sport programming for POWs came directly from the belief in scripture and ecumenical minimalism. To Aid rather than convert: to do unto others, and for the least of God's people. As theology is the study of religion and religious belief, theology offers the dogmatic traditions in which biblical theology is interpreted through different Churches and their adherents. Davis, as a member of the Congregationalist Church, is more difficult to theologically analyse<sup>38</sup> than men of other denominations, however, this does not mean it should not be attempted. Congregationalism adheres to a belief in the Priesthood of all believers.<sup>39</sup> A

principle that began in the churches of the 16th-century Reformation, both Lutheran and Reformed (Congregationalism and Calvinism). The doctrine asserts that all humans have access to God through Christ, the true high priest, and thus do not need a priestly mediator. This introduced a democratic element that all Christians in the congregation are equal. The ordained clergy are representatives of the entire congregation.<sup>40</sup> As such analysis on Davis and YMCA War Prisoner Aid in Canada, from a Calvinist/reformed viewpoint is not out of place, not lacking in academic provenance. The attributes of both myself and how I view Davis affect the point of view in my dissertation, as a theological perspective may to some appear more relevant to this study. However, my intention is to present evidence of Davis and his promotion of YMCA sport programming for POWs regardless of my own opinion as to whether they were a promotion of practical theology or not. The object of this thesis is to present a reasonable explanation to the reader as to why Davis was so adamant in his mission to provide sport programming for POWs in Canadian interment, and the success of the ways in which he carried out his task.

When accounting for Davis' personal hand written notes and personal diary another limitation must be noted. Such resources require a certain tendency to "read between the lines." Short hand can be notoriously messy and will require instances in which squared brackets ([ ]) denoting changes in words, context, tense, or identifications will occur throughout this study.

There are pieces of evidence that, unfortunately, cannot be accessed through this study. Jerome Davis as a devout Congregationalist cannot be identified with an exact doctrine of belief. For, just as the term Congregationalist suggests, a church of this denomination practices unilateral independence in their beliefs, Congregationalists, adhere to the tenets of the Apostles' Creed, as well as the Nicene Creed. However, this said, they believe in the Bible and its scripture as the absolute authority on their church doctrine, worship style, and church government.

Perhaps it was the complete autonomy of the Congregationalist Church that influenced Davis toward the YMCA ecumenical context, wherein he became a firm believer in the good that the YMCA could do. Or perhaps it had something to do with his famous missionary father, his renowned older brother (head of YMCA operations in Japan), and a family that can be traced to early American settlement. While one may make many assumptions as to his upbringing and even his college education at a school previously distinguished as a Presbyterian institution, many of these assumptions could be misleading, and as such these limitations must be taken into account.

## **Delimitations**

Delimitations to this dissertation center around three main limiting positions. Firstly, this dissertation focuses upon Jerome Davis and his tenure as Director of YMCA War Prisoner Aid in Canada from 1939 through 1943. Such a limited time frame may limit the useful information gathered. A conclusion, including brief explanations of his successor's work, will establish Davis' legacy in the field of POW care. Another factor of this dissertation is that it will focus solely on the YMCA and Davis' support of sport programming for POWs. This provides but one dimension in the lives of POWs but will hopefully demonstrate the importance of sport to both the POWs as a service as well as a mission for the YMCA War Prisoner Aid program. Lastly this dissertation will rely heavily upon my own analysis of the sources, both official and non-official. As a professing Christian, I believe my perspective on Davis' personal notes may be of value, and as a theological scholar I believe his official reports must be analysed from a more than purely academic perspective.

This dissertation uses the archival evidence of The University of Oregon, The University of Toronto, The Canadian National Archives, The Franklin D. Roosevelt Archives, The Kautz Family archives at the University of Minnesota, and the Esplanade Medicine Hat archives. Keeping within the limitations of hard copy archive records, this study will not consider or record any YMCA POW operations occurring before and beyond the dates of January 1940 and August 1943. The *Yearbook and Official Rosters of the National Councils of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada and the United States of America*, have delimitations of their own making. These reports are divided into sections. Section one covers the YMCAs and their works in the United States and section two covers YMCA work in Canada. However, World Alliance War Prisoner Aid reports are a section of the main body of work unto itself and it reviews both nations POW YMCA programs within the same report. As such a careful reading of these reports is of paramount importance to ensure the right information on Canada and its POW programming is accurate, and not misleading.

## **Chapter Outline**

Since Jerome Davis was the originator and primary moving force behind the early execution of Campus Life from 1939 to 1943, it is appropriate to follow the introduction with a few answers to the question: Who was Jerome Davis? This will be covered as extensively as possible in Chapter Two. By uncovering Davis' childhood, teens and early adulthood, first mission works, early YMCA work in Russia, and his work during the interwar years (WWI-WWII) we will hopefully uncover reasoning as to his zeal for World War Two Prisoner Aid in North America, as well as reveal his congregationalist intent and its tie in with YMCA ecumenicalism.

Chapter three will treat all YMCA sporting provisions and sponsoring of programs in Ontario-based POW camps from 1940 through 1943. As not all camps were opened at the same time (there were eleven in all) and not always entirely POW-populated, but also enemy alien internment centers, the following chart will depict which camps were in operation over the years of 1940 through 1943. As such, it is important to note that Enemy Merchant Seamen were not classified as POWs until 1941; thus the table below depicts POW camps that were in operation pre-classification of Enemy Merchant Seamen and populated with only POWs.

**Table 1. Years of Camp Operations in Ontario During Davis Directorship of War Prisoner Aid**

Ontario POW Camps Open By Year	1940	1941	1942	1943
Gravenhurst/Claydor				
Espanola				
Bowmanville				
Neys				

Chapter three will also endeavour to discover why such large proportions of sporting goods compared to general recreation items were provided to the Ontario base camps as well as numerous satellite camps, and hopefully, provide deeper insight into why sporting goods were so highly valued above other freely-given aid.<sup>41</sup>

Chapter four, not unlike Chapter three will also attempt to provide YMCA records of sporting goods and programming provided to Alberta-based camps from 1940 through 1943, as well as applicable news reports of the region. Much like Ontario not all camps in Alberta were in operation at the same time. However, the number of camps in Alberta was much smaller- only

four camps were operational, and three of them only between 1940 and 1943. It is important to note that when Alberta camps were built and became operational they were much larger facilities than ever before built in Canada. Large amounts of German POWs arrived in New York City, and boarded a train bound for Southern Alberta. The two main camps located at Lethbridge and Medicine Hat each held over 10,000 men each, and sometimes upwards of 12,000. The following table depicts the years of Alberta POW camp operation from 1940 through 1943.

**Table 2. Years of Camp Operations in Alberta During Davis Directorship of War Prisoner Aid**

Alberta POW Camps Open By Year	1940	1941	1942	1943
Medicine Hat				
Ozada/Lethbridge				
Seebe/Kanaskis				

Large camp populations of 10,000 men or more will hopefully provide valuable evidence not only in the quantity and quality of goods provided, but hopefully shed light on the massive scale which the YMCA was faced with its mission. Analysis will be done on whether there were shortcomings on the part of the YMCA in terms of provisions and whether the general public's awareness of POWs was fully understood and considered.

Chapter five will be an overall round up of Davis' reflections on the Canadian POW camps overall. His generalized statements on the camps, and statements of his intent and faith as reason to why Davis believed so deeply in his mission.



The dissertation will conclude in chapter six, which will deal with non-predetermined results of YMCA sport programming as well as an analysis of the YMCA War Prisoner Aid sport provisions and programming's results. It will also present concluding thoughts on Davis' POW Sporting Aid legacy, Boeschstein's continuance of the program, and sport provision and programming for POWs legacy as they were fostered and continued far beyond the Second World War.

## **Literature Review**

When looking into the literature concerning this dissertation it is important to focus on two key focal points of the study, Jerome Dwight Davis and the YMCA war Prisoner Aid program. However, one must also consider that the corpus of literature relating to the Canadian YMCA history, and WWII POWs treatment versus treatment during any other wartime conflict, is vast although often broad in context. Each work in relation to these various topics has a different focus and story to tell.

### **General**

To examine the topic of the YMCA and War Prisoner Aid under the leadership of Jerome Davis one must first understand the development of the YMCA itself, and its involvement within the military in North America.

The YMCA began on June 6th, 1844 in London, England, created by George Williams, a young draper's assistant, who experienced in himself a development of bad habits and believed that London was lacking constructive pastimes for workers outside of their jobs. Williams saw London as a city full of vice. As a young man from the countryside raised in a religious home, he did not believe that being lured by vice was his only option. Williams' solution was to create a home away from home for young men. He believed that creating a substitute for character-

forming, health-preserving, Sabbath-keeping homes, which many young men were forced to leave to pursue career ambitions, was not only necessary but of paramount importance.

Binfield's *George Williams and the Y.M.C.A: A Study in Victorian Social Attitudes* describes the life of Williams leading up to his makeshift prayer group and the inspiration to establish the YMCA. Binfield tells of Williams' role model Rev. Binney and the early YMCA struggles during a period of suspicion and denominational rivalry in the first half century of the 1800s. Because it was not acceptable or possible for most Churches to provide young men with what was classified as amusement activity, George Williams and his supporters, indeed fellow YMCA members, made it their task to encourage morally positive amusements. Pastimes such as smoking and billiards became popular with men in cities but although the YMCA believed that smoking was a vice, it chose to let individual YMCAs, as they spread across Europe and North America, decide what they would allow in their buildings. A majority of them curbed the use of tobacco until the Great War and World War Two. Culturally, in Britain many middle-class men of the 1800s through to the Second World War felt a need to perform physical feats in to distinguish themselves as more masculine than their lower-class male peers. They desired to prove their masculinity in a rapidly expanding industrial city being filled with an ever-growing stream of lower-class factory workers.<sup>42</sup> Through much of the industrial revolution the YMCA became the perfect outlet for such activities. International YMCA conferences made resolutions to support athletic programming as early as the 1850s. Important, too, was a healthy dose of health promotion ideals. In 1860 the international YMCA's conference advocated the building of gymnasiums for all YMCAs.<sup>43</sup> With societal values placing an emphasis on masculine displays of strength, moral or otherwise, George Williams and Church leaders felt that Satan lay in wait for the souls of men in many masculine athletic activities. Consequently, the YMCA believed it

could take the bulk of masculine activities and, through the application of Christian beliefs, make them wholesome and character-building. Many social reformers of the time found turning recreational pursuits into acceptable moral activities a worthy endeavour. YMCA leaders also confronted temperance issues, and slowly changed games like billiards from amusements to acceptable recreational activities. Gymnasiums (not strongly endorsed until the 1860s) were initially not even on the horizon of YMCA-planned recreational activities, but a dislike of billiards and smoking led early YMCA leaders to introduce athletics as a positive alternative.

As Hodder Williams' *The Life of Sir George Williams* reminds us, George Williams was a man who held to his creed fervently and with sincerity, and thus we should remember that the foundations of the first YMCA "were laid in prayer in an upper room, in the fervent, effectual prayers of young men." When the original YMCA prayer group expanded to 12 young men,<sup>44</sup> a circular was issued to work establishments around London inviting young men to join. As it grew, the original YMCA moved multiple times, eventually occupying permanent headquarters on Gresham Street. A program aimed at the mental expansion of men's minds beyond mere religion was quickly implemented: the famous Exeter Hall Lectures.<sup>45</sup> What made the YMCA successful was its level of personal contact supported and strengthened through prayer and fervent Bible studies. George Williams and his supporters, firmly recognized in their right to offer Bible-based activities that did not step on the toes of organized religion, sent representatives to the 1851 Great International Exhibition to promote their activities worldwide.<sup>46</sup> This action turned the YMCA towards becoming a national and eventually an international organization. The first international conference of YMCAs was held in August 1855 in Paris where the following resolution was adopted:

The Young Men's Christian Associations seek to unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures,

desire to be his disciples in their doctrine and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the exertion of His Kingdom among young men<sup>47</sup>

By July of 1855, it was necessary for Williams to confirm publicly that the YMCA was only an auxiliary arm of the Church. Impressively, by 1878, as Hodder Williams reported there were 8,000 YMCA branches within the YMCA World Alliance.<sup>48</sup>

The development of the YMCA in North America was less rapid but very similar to its older sister organizations in Britain and Europe. The very first YMCA in North America was established in 1851. This honour belongs to the city of Montreal. According to Hopkins' *History of the Y.M.C.A in North America*<sup>49</sup> and Cross' *One Hundred Years of Service with Youth: The Story of the Montreal Y.M.C.A.*,<sup>50</sup> it is particularly important to note that Montreal was a predominantly Catholic city, and YMCAs worldwide were designed to operate under the framework of Protestant Evangelization. Quickly following the Montreal YMCA were YMCAs in Halifax 1853, Toronto 1853, and Charlottetown 1856, each drawing support from local affluent businessmen. Though Montreal experienced sustained success, others floundered and had to reorganize at a later date. Such was the case in Toronto, having to reorganize in 1864. These early Canadian YMCAs were focused on a program of evangelical, intellectual, and educational matters; they were designed and intended to be organizations of practical Christian service. According to Ross' *The Y.M.C.A in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century*, all such organizations were based on the London, England YMCA model aimed at practicing fundamental principles of Evangelical Christianity.<sup>51</sup> While both the Montreal and Toronto YMCAs had constitutions that stated their goals as the religious and mental improvement of men, "in connection with the study of the scriptures,"<sup>52</sup> only Montreal flourished. After the Toronto YMCA's reorganization in 1864, its constitution became more specific, becoming the model to follow for many

organizations across Canada.<sup>53</sup> Ross believes that in the case of Toronto, the goals of improving spiritual and mental conditions of young men through the provision of reading rooms and libraries, accommodations for Bible studies, social prayer events, lectures and courses on religious and secular subjects, “long prayers, papers [reports], and talks on religious subjects monopolized the time of the meeting[s].”<sup>54</sup> This left very little time for the practicalities required for operating the organization in a businesslike manner, which might have improved the Toronto YMCA’s circumstances, as well as other YMCAs in Canada in general. Regardless of these early setbacks, many YMCAs expanded to more community-involved programs for younger men, teaching classes in writing, arithmetic, reading, spelling, grammar, history, and geography. Some YMCA libraries expanded to hold over 600 volumes of reading materials.<sup>55</sup> Among the difficulties early YMCAs faced was their relationship with the established Churches, many of which were openly hostile to the young organization, so much so that many Churches initiated their own denominational men’s groups as a counteraction against the nondenominational YMCA programs.<sup>56</sup>

By 1854 Canadian YMCAs were part of a confederation with American YMCAs. However, by 1855, Montreal and Toronto had withdrawn from the confederation due to the contentious issue of Canada willingly accepting integrated associations with negro men and boys. American YMCAs resisted this social accommodation.<sup>57</sup> Young men immigrated to America in the pathway of 19<sup>th</sup> Century expansion and development westward YMCA growth in the American west, western YMCA organization in Canada was much delayed and where it did materialize the focus was on youth, not older working men. Interestingly, Western YMCAs though they aimed at saving young men before they fell under the influence of corruption, left the saving of those already corrupted to organizations such as the Salvation Army.<sup>58</sup>

According to research by Ross and Hopkins, the YMCA's development in Canada/North America underwent three basic phases. The first phase focused on evangelization, the hosting of large religious gatherings (mass meetings), tract distribution to factories and various places of employment, with a few lectures in between. The second phase emphasized group Bible studies as opposed to mass meetings. Young men's meetings were a focus, as were worker-training classes, personal introspection, educational classes, new physical works, and social activities. The third phase, a four-fold program, was not prominent in Canada until the early 1880s. The four-fold program focused on developing a young man into a well-rounded individual involving his development in social, intellectual, spiritual, and physical matters. Sport and physical matters eventually eclipsed all other dimensions of YMCA programming.<sup>59</sup> In 1888 the first Canadian official YMCA handbook was published for the benefit of organization leaders, providing guidance to all the smaller YMCAs that had sprung up coast to coast.

The Canadian YMCAs during early years had registered only slight concerns in their educational attendance eclipsing religious event attendance. Nevertheless by 1888, the popularity and attendance of physical programs far outstripped specifically religious programming. To counteract this, short religious events such as prayer and song were often conducted as preludes to the more popular athletics program. Still YMCA leadership in Canada was not immediately concerned with this trend. Physical programs were not merely structured sports classes, but addressed issues such as hygiene and, eventually, sex education, subjects far apart from Bible study. Physical education classes proved more attractive and interesting for men of all ages.<sup>60</sup> By 1889 there were 21 YMCAs in Canada, not counting the sporadic opening and closing of various organizations with less than five years of history. Boy's work (programs in which only boys under the age of 15 were allowed attendance) focused on the up-bringing of Christian boys. In

Canada this accelerated in earnest beginning in the 1890s, the same year in which regional development in the prairies led to the organization of a North-West convention and the establishment of many new YMCAs.<sup>61</sup> In 1904 a Canadian National YMCA provisional committee was established to focus upon the newly-developing Canadian west.<sup>62</sup> In 1914 all Canadian organizations moved to form their own National Council, separate from the American National Council. Canada having proved itself as a nation on the battlefields of Europe prompted Canadian YMCAs to embrace a larger measure of nationalism and to feel more capable of its own YMCA administration.<sup>63</sup> (Refer to Chart 1 below to see the structure design of the world-wide YMCA)

#### **Chart 1: YMCA Organization**



## YMCA Military Involvement

It has been contested by various historians that YMCA work with prisoners of war officially began during the First World War, while others argue that it was during the American Civil War in which the first evidence of YMCA work with Prisoners of War began. Regardless



of the exact date that marked the YMCAs introduction to prisoners of war work, it is important to note that as Canada entered the Second World War, the International and local YMCAs were ready, willing, and well prepared to aid prisoners of war at home and abroad.

To better understand the variety of conditions for athletics in POW camps within Canada, and the significance for further investigation, an analysis of the historical development of The Worlds Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations War Prisoner Aid Program, from its inception to its immense growth and popularity in North America is necessary. YMCA participation with the military at large in the North American context is vital to understand the genesis of the World's Committee, and North American International Committee War Prisoner Aid programs.

The earliest involvement of North American YMCAs with the armed forces focus on Canada. According to Hopkins,<sup>64</sup> the Ontario and Quebec YMCAs worked within militia camps as early as 1859.<sup>65</sup> The Montreal and Toronto YMCAs, by distributing tracts and offering bible classes, were active in Canadian militia camps during the Finnian raids.<sup>66</sup> This early activity proves that not only was the YMCA active in pre-confederation Canada but that the YMCAs were already fulfilling their mission in the realm of salvation of men's souls. By 1871 the Toronto YMCA worked with the volunteer militia at Camp Niagara for the entirety of the summer, providing reading materials, meeting facilities for sabbath services and bible studies, and, more specifically, gymnastic apparatus.<sup>67</sup> This type of military work within the Canadian YMCAs is estimated by Hopkins to have lasted for several decades. Nova Scotian records, for example show such works continuing past 1892.<sup>68</sup>

Direct corroboration of these activities can be found in the *Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Convention of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and British*

*Provinces Held at Baltimore MD, May 21-25, 1879.*<sup>69</sup> Evidence of YMCA expansion and popularity throughout Canada is abundant. For instance, Canada had three representatives participating on three of the five standing committees for the convention: the business committee, the devotional committee, and the associations committee.<sup>70</sup> Thomas J. Wilkie, Secretary of the Toronto YMCA, reported that they had recently employed a professor for their gymnasium and rambling parties, which had the direct effect of greatly increasing their membership. In fact, Wilkie reported that on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1879 they hosted 200 men over the course of the day.<sup>71</sup> He later reported that they had appointed a Secretary for railroad works and within two months 410 personal conversions to Christ were reported.<sup>72</sup> Canadian YMCAs purchased 335 association-produced circulars in 1878.<sup>73</sup> Further, at the 1879 conference two Canadian representatives were elected to the Executive Committee of the North American YMCAs.<sup>74</sup> Each reported on their duties and how they could improve their outreach to more young men heavily burdened with concerns, of which they were hesitant to address with peers.<sup>75</sup> The proceedings also captured a glimpse of the rapid expansion of YMCA programming in Canada over the previous three years as employment numbers of Secretaries increased from four to fifteen.<sup>76</sup> The Proceedings of the 1879 convention also featured executive committee reports from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec YMCAs. These reports dealt with the conditions of the YMCAs in various regions and the progress made in expansion.<sup>77</sup> Fundraising reports for Railroads and Western Work saw the Canadian YMCAs contributing \$239.66 for programming.<sup>78</sup> It was also reported that Canada employed fifteen general Secretaries, and embraced a membership of 542 men in New Brunswick, 1,612 in Nova Scotia, 3,543 in Ontario and 1,276 in Quebec.<sup>79</sup> With such robust membership numbers it is little wonder that Canadian YMCAs submitted a significant number of reports to the Baltimore

convention: New Brunswick sent 9 reports, Newfoundland 1, Nova Scotia 42, Ontario 45, Prince Edward Island 3 and Quebec 7.<sup>80</sup> While these reports varied in length and provided vastly different circumstances in enlightening the Executive Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association of the United States and British Provinces, they prove that the YMCA was active in Canada during a time that many heretofore have neglected to consider.

Arguably, the most widely acknowledged YMCA involvement in North American Military Works occurred during the American Civil War (1861 to 1865.) The American Civil war brought to the North American International YMCA its first experience with Prisoner of War Camps, existing on both sides of the great conflict. Andersonville Prison Camp was but one example of the many POW camps that were generally overcrowded, unsanitary, lacking in heat, ridden with disease, and starvation; it was reported that 13,000 Union soldiers imprisoned in Andersonville between 1864 and 1865 died from such causes.<sup>81</sup> It was at the 1860 YMCA International convention that Physical Works, pertaining to hygiene, permeated the consciousness of YMCA workers in military camps and eventually POW camps, becoming in time a permanent part of YMCA programming.<sup>82</sup>

Unfortunately, the Civil War broke the bonds of communion between Northern and Southern YMCA associations, leading to individual YMCAs (although always autonomous) developing their own reasoning for joining war programming efforts, and independently deciding on the provisions they would provide. Many associations of that time lost enough membership to render themselves ineffective, some had to close.<sup>83</sup> In fact, many army regiments formed their own affiliations by either appointing a representative or enlisting a YMCA local leader with their unit.<sup>84</sup> This scenario however, did not spell the demise of the YMCA in either the North or the South. *The Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Young Men's Christian*

*Associations of the United States and British Provinces Held in Philadelphia June 1865* believed the YMCA was poised for the future by stating, “We have cause for devout gratitude to God that so many of our associations have been able to survive the exciting scenes through which we have passed. The war has seriously interfered with our progress. We hope that its termination will find us ready to enter with a new zeal upon the work of reorganizing and strengthening our Associations for the work of saving young men, as originally established.”<sup>85</sup>

The direct disagreements between Northern and Southern YMCAs was political, and, at times, not purely ethical. Although the YMCA since its inception agreed to avoid political stances (a position taken to facilitate harmony amongst all associations), American YMCAs failed in this endeavour. The Convention of American YMCAs in 1859 revised its articles of confederation, thereby allowing for political differences of opinion amongst all North and South YMCAs. This provoked an unfortunate complication leading up to the Civil discord within America at the time.<sup>86</sup> The New York YMCA, deeply concerned for soldiers in the Union Army, decided to distribute tracts, testaments, and hymnbooks to regiments stationed nearby or merely passing through.<sup>87</sup> This is verified through the *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Young Men’s Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces Held in Philadelphia June 1865*.<sup>88</sup> It is stated that the New York YMCA expenditures for such activities, including appointing a committee for the visitation of the sick and wounded, amounted to \$6,790.00 in 1865 alone.<sup>89</sup> The Brooklyn YMCA’s concern was centered on all military personnel and merchant seamen in local Navy Yards.<sup>90</sup> Brooklyn YMCAs struggled to keep their doors open but did so through generous donations. An “open door” policy to non-members complemented the city’s missions work, of which the navy yards were a part.<sup>91</sup>

The Chicago YMCA cared for the sick, destitute and wounded of various POW camps,<sup>92</sup> as well as hosting daily prayer meetings, bible classes on the sabbath, mission schools (in which they employed 29 teachers), and a relief department that extended physician's care as well as burial services, on which the YMCA spent \$22,000.00 a year. The YMCAs of Chicago totalled expenses in 1865 of \$83,189.93.<sup>93</sup> They reported having sent 101 men to the front lines and various Civil War encampments, but regretted not having listed membership lost to enlistments, and death.

Boston's YMCA aided sailors and marines at the Charlestown Navy Yards. Being located near the harbour and having over 1,000 active members, the Boston YMCA was capable of many more active war programs than many its contemporaries. It hosted prayer meetings every evening aboard the "receiving ship *Ohio*," which resulted in frequent conversions among the sailors.<sup>94</sup> It reported the distribution of 113,500 tracts, 15,000 sailors 'small books,' 10,000 soldier's hymn books, 175 bibles, and 1410 testaments. Such work was carried on by "nine young men [who had] been engaged every sabbath morning, [who had] as far as possible engaged in personal conversion and handed cards of invitation to visit the [YMCA] rooms."<sup>95</sup> According to Boston's YMCA financial reporting it spent \$465,121.47 on all their military programming of that past year, serving an average of 800 men daily.<sup>96</sup>

In November 1861 the New York YMCA brought together 50 delegates from 15 YMCAs to review proposed army work, and works already in progress. It was at this meeting that YMCA leaders decided upon the establishment of the YMCA Christian Commission. The newly minted Christian Commission was placed in control of religious work within the military.<sup>97</sup> It also was commissioned to absorb YMCAs not capable of surviving by accepting members into its volunteer ranks. Oddly enough, many members of the Christian Committees separated

themselves from the YMCA leadership, at times graduating towards becoming vendors of an autonomous public works program in line with the American Sanitary Commission. And yet, they never worked in conjunction with each other.<sup>98</sup> By 1862 the American federal government granted permission to the Christian Commission branch of YMCA operations to work on the front lines. By the war's end 5,000 men and women worked in this capacity, with no compensation for their efforts.<sup>99</sup> The YMCA, designed primarily for men, found it relatively easy to become embedded in individual brigades serving in both the North and South military structures. This was true with respect to brigades in Georgia as well as Mississippi, perhaps because of the closure of most individual YMCAs in the south.<sup>100</sup>

Testament to the necessity of the YMCAs assistance for men serving on Civil War battle fields, as well as for men imprisoned during the conflict, was the case of Federal Prison camp at Johnson's Island, Ohio, in which Southern youths "organized a YMCA through which one hundred men were converted...Colonel[s], Major[s], [and] lieutenants amongst them." Their chief interests were "looking after the prison hospital, being allowed to purchase special supplies for the sick. It had, in addition to religious interests, weekly lecture meetings at which some members presented a carefully prepared original address or essay, one of which has survived in the form of a valedictory poem, read at the last meeting, May 19, 1865."<sup>101</sup> The American Civil War marks the first known instance of the YMCA in North America being involved with Prisoners of War. Though it was originated in the form of an organic outgrowth from the prisoner population, it marks a remarkable moment in YMCA POW involvement history.

YMCA involvement within the armed forces, be it for serving men in the field or those unfortunate enough to be imprisoned, managed to demonstrate to YMCA leaders and the general populous the benefits of YMCA war time operations. Such benefits were to be seen in later years

in conflicts such as the Spanish-American War, the Boer War, World War One and eventually, the Second World War.

The Spanish American War raged from April to August 1898. On 25 April 1898 within three days of the declaration of war, the International Committee of the YMCAs, in remembrance of the works done in the American Civil War, re-started the Christian Commission.<sup>102</sup> Perhaps the most pertinent information coming from the Spanish American War, is contained in the *Yearbook of the Young Men's Christian Association of North America 1899.*<sup>103</sup> There were two instances in which men from the YMCA executive committee were in Washington, and there they predicted the upcoming hostilities a month in advance. Their advice led to pre-emptive YMCA talks of preparation.<sup>104</sup> This conflict saw 250,000 men mobilized, their average age being under twenty-four years of age.<sup>105</sup> Though YMCA military works were halted between the American Civil War and the Spanish American War, they were present in National Guard camps.<sup>106</sup> This made the expansion of military works during wartime easier to facilitate.

The Christian Commission, originated by the YMCA during the American Civil War, as previously mentioned, disconnected itself from the YMCA leadership, but remained organized and in close contact with YMCA administration to prevent duplication of support for the armed forces and the chance of wastage of funds.<sup>107</sup> This was no longer the case during Spanish American War and the First World War as the Christian Commission remained under tight reign of the YMCA war operations staff. The above-mentioned Yearbook reporting on the Spanish American War, makes the first ever YMCA mention of sports supplies for American servicemen. Through YMCA Secretaries, in co-operation with army chaplains, facilities and supplies for “games of skill and recreative sports” were effected.<sup>108</sup> According to the evidence, during the

months of the Spanish American War the YMCA mounted operations in 40 state-run camps, with 76 workers and 74 tents in operations.<sup>109</sup> By the war's conclusion 173 Secretaries were working in YMCA war operations, 50 of these Secretaries being under the jurisdiction of their state YMCA rather than the International Committee.<sup>110</sup> The YMCA mandate for this war can be best summed up by the reported remarks of a mother parting with her soldier son, "the only thing I have to give you as my parting word is that you remember your creator."<sup>111</sup> The most conservative estimate the YMCA can provide on this thought is that approximately 8,000 men were converted during the Spanish American War.<sup>112</sup>

The yearbook of 1899 shows two important details about YMCA involvement in the Spanish American War. Firstly, YMCA operations with African-American troops, and secondly in importance for the topic of this dissertation, YMCA work among Spanish Prisoners of War.<sup>113</sup> The 1899 year book introduces the subject of YMCA prisoner of war aid by copying the letter granting permission from the American Government to do such works, in which it was stated "Permission is hereby granted to the duly authorized representatives of the Army and Navy Christian Commission to furnish and distribute, books, magazines and newspapers printed in Spanish or English, stationary and facilities for writing letters, and other personal conveniences among Spanish prisoners, near Portsmouth, N.H. This work to be carried on in a manner approved by the commanding officer."<sup>114</sup> YMCA workers reported that most of the prisoners were mere boys, and that the Spanish language printed copies of the gospels they distributed were the most popular items among the POWs. The YMCA also treated the sick and wounded, as well as helped to bury the dead. They reported that the Spanish POWs were shocked by the aid and services rendered to them, as their own country had no such aid programs. YMCA workers believed this was a good way in which to spread their message of Christian charity to a



Catholic nation, a nation that would benefit from giving Christian charitable aid to those who required it. They hoped above all for the spread of the YMCA to other nations.<sup>115</sup>

The YMCA extended into international work overseas in Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, and Guam. They established bases of operations for the occupying forces that remained in the overseas theaters after the wars conclusion. As finances were strained the ability to do so was a mark of true dedication to the YMCA cause. The International Committee spent \$80, 946.25 on YMCA work abroad and at home, while state YMCA committees spent a total of \$54,279 on domestic operations. A total of \$135,225.25 was spent on war programs that lasted a mere five months.<sup>116</sup> What is important to note is that this denotes the first time that YMCAs in North America purposely set out to give aid to Prisoners of War; this occurrence was the genesis of the International War Prisoner Aid program that rose in importance in both world wars.

Canadian YMCA involvement in the Second Boer War of 1899 was of little interest to the International Committee of the North American YMCAs just as the Spanish American War was of little interest to the Canadian National YMCA committee. However, this short moment of Canadian military YMCA involvement was part of a greater Canadian movement for national identity, something that was not lost on the Canadian YMCA leadership.<sup>117</sup> With the mobilization of Canadian troops to be sent to South Africa, Canadian YMCAs mobilized their best Secretaries to be sent over with each contingent. Only two battalions ended up being deployed. However, they went with a well supplied, well prepared YMCA Secretary.<sup>118</sup> The Secretaries who went were chosen as the best representatives of Canada rather than as a representative of a regional area. In this manner Canadian YMCAs in entirety could strengthen their National cause and identity.<sup>119</sup> Canadians at home paid close attention to the battle in South Africa, glorifying soldiers as having done a good job. They also believed that the YMCA, its

fundraising, shipment of supplies, and the duty of Secretaries had been effective. Having distinguished themselves in South Africa in the eyes of their British counterparts,<sup>120</sup> Secretaries for the most part conducted religious services and handled the distribution of tracts and bibles. Their mandate had been given to them by the Canadian YMCA Businessmen's Committee, a unit formed of regional YMCA leaders based out of Toronto.<sup>121</sup> The committee detailed the work they wished done by the Secretaries overseas and executed the fundraising required to accomplish it.<sup>122</sup> It was their intention not to send programmers, but rather evangelists that could convert men to the overall national YMCA cause of creating a Kingdom of God on earth.<sup>123</sup> It is important however to note that although the Businessmen's Committee was created to fundraise, committee members were considered YMCA laymen, meaning they were neither trained to fundraise, nor further the Christian cause. And yet, they did an admirable job of both. Soon, though these jobs became professionalized and YMCA-trained Secretaries took over most of these tasks. It would be these Secretaries, once formally trained, that took the helm of war programming and POW care during the conflicts soon to come.

The Canadian YMCA in the first World War was an agency well on its way to becoming a social service organization at home and abroad. War Prisoner Aid was provided through the Overseas division of the newly reorganized International Committee of North America.<sup>124</sup> Within the Home division of the International Committee, the Canadian National Council was situated, and beneath it sat the four regional councils (provincial groups), which in turn developed policy and did most of the fundraising for Canadian YMCA war programming.<sup>125</sup> The International Committee's plan for Prisoner of War aid grew out of the International Committee's General-Secretary, John. R. Mott. Mott believed that ideal YMCA international service should extend to all nations, in effect an enumeration of the old Christian ethos: to do

unto each other.<sup>126</sup> All War Prisoner Aid was administered through the World Committee of YMCAs, at the time headquartered in Berne, Switzerland. At the time of Americas entry into WWI in 1917, the YMCA of America already had YMCA Secretaries serving overseas.<sup>127</sup> The main reasoning that YMCA leaders embraced regarding work within POW camps rested on the assumption that POWs would be willing to better their situation and take upon themselves the burden of work required for instituting required provisional services.<sup>128</sup> According to American YMCA statistics \$1,100,000.00 was invested in POW work alone between 1917 and 1919.<sup>129</sup> Unfortunately, the Canadian YMCA unlike the American YMCA did not take as meticulous notes on their programming endeavours, and as such the hundreds of sporting events believed to be held by the YMCA have left behind little to no evidence.<sup>130</sup>

Canadian YMCA involvement in WWI, unfortunately, is largely unrecorded. The evidence that does exist can be found in Murray G. Ross' *The YMCA in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century*,<sup>131</sup> in which it is stated that the Canadian National Council of YMCAs, satisfied with the experience gained in previous militia work and the Boer War, offered its services to the Canadian government on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1914, shortly before WWI commenced.<sup>132</sup> One week later the Ontario and Quebec council of YMCAs received news that the offer had been accepted. The YMCA installed Secretaries at Camp Valcartier in Quebec, quickly erecting huts and tents.<sup>133</sup> On the opening night of the camp, YMCA Secretaries held a bonfire, at which short talks were presented and hymn singing took place. When the first contingent of Canadian soldiers were shipped off to England, six YMCA Secretaries of overseas military work went with them.<sup>134</sup>

At first the YMCA Secretaries who had been travelling with the battalions were prevented from entering France. However intrepid Secretaries were not deterred. The negotiated

official permission from the commanding officers of their assigned units and made their own way to France, circumventing both the rules and the embarkation officers. Four Secretaries had managed this feat before official permission was eventually granted.<sup>135</sup> Officially YMCA workers were classified as “allowable personnel” at the front’s battlefields under British government sanction. YMCA Secretaries were sent with the fighting men to provide the best cultural and spiritual influences possible under the circumstances. Like the men who served in the armed forces, YMCA Secretaries were loyal to the King and felt it their Christian obligation to serve.

When Camp Borden (west of Barrie, Ontario) was built YMCA Secretaries assigned there realized the ground upon which the camp was built was too sandy for athletic events. This realization resulted in the YMCA’s motivation to build an outdoor gymnasium for basketball, volleyball and indoor baseball. (A game designed to play in a gymnasium rather than a baseball diamond.)<sup>136</sup> Such a large project shows how seriously the Canadian YMCA looked upon athletic events, at least for their own soldiers. An important notation concerning YMCA work done for the armed forces is the fact that most fundraising, policy changes, and incentives for activities were designed and paid for through the hard work of the lay-community of YMCA workers. The projects inspired from these workers ranged from hot drink carts at the front lines in France to mass religious services.<sup>137</sup>

YMCA Secretaries were not the only officials concerned with the welfare of soldiers at home and overseas. In fact, the Canadian military assigned officers who were to work for the military in propping up programs of sport, religion, entertainment, education, canteens, and other such services.<sup>138</sup> This often lead to an overlap in sport programming. For the most part though YMCA Secretaries were more than willing to work in conjunction with military officials.

Canada demonstrated widespread development of sports and athletics and the participation of thousands of men during the war years that led to rapid athletic YMCA athletic programming growth immediately following the war. In fact, much YMCA POW aid and sport programming continued immediately following the war, most particularly overseas. By January 1919, some 200,000 Russian prisoners were still being held in Germany. Many camp-elected POW leaders of the time wrote to the North American committee of YMCAs requesting aid. A large Christmas shipment to the prisoners prompted camp elected leaders to convey its thanks to the YMCA, relaying the information that ever since they received the packages they had been constantly carrying on sports, classes, and religious services to save themselves from utter despair.<sup>139</sup> It has been reported by Ross that the Canadian YMCAs spent over a half-a-million dollars on sporting equipment for athletic programming for Canadian soldiers alone. Most of these supplies were auctioned off following the war, translating into funds leading to more widespread YMCA sport programming across the nation, giving to the Canadian YMCAs a \$400,000-dollar surplus.<sup>140</sup> Also following the war, something that weighed heavily on the minds of North American YMCAs was the urgent need to continue aid to POWs. In 1920 there were still 12,000 German POWs in Siberia alone, leading to a YMCA POW budget that year of \$6,662.14.<sup>141</sup>

As the previous historical information has stated, the YMCA looked back on a vast history in North America dealing with the armed forces of both Canada and the United States. As YMCAs in North America were close in programming policy it can be stated that Canadian-governed YMCAs established a legacy in the treatment of military personnel, including POWs, that served them well in preparation for the Second World War.

One fact which must be discussed concerning the Canadian YMCAs involvement with POW camps is the relative silence on either Davis or the YMCA War Prisoner Aid in both YMCA and general WWII literature. In fact, seven books dedicated directly to POWs in Canada and the Canadian YMCA make no mention of Davis or the YMCA war prisoner aid program. While Draper,<sup>142</sup> Waiser,<sup>143</sup> Carter,<sup>144</sup> Koch,<sup>145</sup> Bishop,<sup>146</sup> Hurst<sup>147</sup> and the International Survey of Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations,<sup>148</sup> make large contributions to the literature surrounding Canada in WWII and the POWs detained within Canadian borders, they make no mention of Davis or war prisoner aid at all.

Other authors, too, barely mention Davis or the YMCA War Prisoner Aid. Latourette mentions Davis twice and POWs only six times in "*World Service: A History of Foreign Work and World Service of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and Canada*."<sup>149</sup> Melady makes one mention of Davis and his work by sourcing only one document, a two page article written by Davis for the *Christian Century Journal*.<sup>150</sup> Vance makes but two references to the YMCA War Prisoner Aid,<sup>151</sup> and Ross makes only ten to the war work in general, never mind a focus on Davis or war prisoner aid.<sup>152</sup> Auger mentions the war prisoner aid program five times in "*Prisoners of the Home Front: German POWs and Enemy Aliens in Southern Quebec, 1940-46*,"<sup>153</sup> with nary a word about Davis. Hopkins, almost alone, manages to mention the war prisoner aid of the YMCA twice in his expansive book on the history of the YMCA in North America.<sup>154</sup>

The authors that do the most credible job reporting on Davis and the YMCA war prisoner aid are Jones, Zimmerman and Keshen. Jones mentions Davis some twenty times in reference to his work with POWs in Canada,<sup>155</sup> Zimmerman mentions the POW work of the YMCA four times, while relating information on war prisoner aid in Canada six times.<sup>156</sup> Keshen mentions

war prisoner aid seven times in its relation to prisoners of war.<sup>157</sup> However expansive the work done pertaining to POWs in Canada and their lives and struggles, the “discovery and analysis” of YMCA war prisoner aid and the man who strove to provide it for POWs is both perplexing and deplorable. Such a glaring lack of attribution in the literature needs correcting.

With regard to the authors cited above and their contributions to the literature surrounding Davis and the World Alliance of YMCAs War Prisoner Aid, none recognize the history of the YMCA of Canada’s involvement in national military circumstance as it developed from 1939 through 1945, as well as YMCA recognition of the need for continuance of war prisoner aid such as that which they had supplied following the First World War.

The year 1939 provides the threshold for Canada’s entry into WWII, and likewise Canadian YMCA war prisoner aid development. However, the American YMCA did not follow suit until 1941 after the United States declared war following the Attack on Pearl Harbour in December 7<sup>th</sup> of that year. Literature on YMCA involvement and development of programming during the war is vast and informative. As such the *Yearbook and Official Rosters of the National Councils of the Young Men’s Christian Associations of Canada and the United States of America*<sup>158</sup> from the years 1939 through 1946 an important document to describe the development of War prisoner aid and the North American YMCAs increased war programming endeavours. These yearbooks and their contained reports cover primarily data on facility usage, Secretarial hiring, Secretarial losses, and educational levels of their new employees in war service-related positions. They also contain participation numbers at athletic programming facilities, and events. Beyond such data the following YMCA yearbooks reporting contain information pertaining to War Prisoner Aid, expenses in relation to the work with POWs, and the expanding programming endeavours associated with War Prisoner Aid.

*The Yearbook and Official Rosters of the National Councils of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada and the United States of America, 1939*<sup>159</sup> is silent in matters concerning War Prisoner Aid in Canada. However, the document does reveal planning put in place by the Canadian YMCA National Council for war entry. The plans were: (1) the appointment of a special sub-committee on war services personnel, (2) the provision for a liaison between the personnel services and their new war services committee, (3) the development of a personnel policy for the guidance of war services committees, (4) the selection of seven YMCA men for overseas service with the Canadian armed forces, (5) the selection of 9 YMCA men for service in Canada with a focus on the military, and lastly (6) a plan to secure selected men of superior ability for war services in the future months.<sup>160</sup> Such preparations poised the YMCA for activity in the first few years of the war. It is also important to note that Canadian POW operations before America's entry into the war were under the policy directives of Great Britain. When America entered the conflict Canadian policies for POWs were soon placed under the directive of American POW policy, even though remaining under the direct administration of Canada's national defence department.

The YMCA Yearbook and Official Roster of 1940<sup>161</sup> for Canada and the United States reported a month-long visit from Tracy Strong, General Secretary of the World Alliance of YMCAs. He conferred with the Under-Secretary of state, Dr. E.H Coleman (director of Canadian internment operations), on matters of POW internment conditions and future plans. While in Canada, Strong visited several POW camps already established in view of reporting back to the German government.<sup>162</sup> While in Canada Strong requested permission to appoint a Secretary of the World Committee of YMCAs to carry on work with POWs on a permanent basis.<sup>163</sup> His request was quickly granted, prompting the arrival of Jerome Davis at the headquarters of the



Canadian War Prisoner Aid established in Toronto. The 1940 yearbook also reported statistics on Canadian YMCA employment numbers and usage of facilities, attesting to the value of its expanded work.

The year 1941, as depicted by the North American YMCA's yearbook report on Prisoner of War Services of the Canadian YMCA for 1941, illuminated that the War Department and YMCA War Work leaders were keeping close contact with the War Prisoners Aid of the World Alliance of YMCAs. They also believed that by maintaining these relationships they would better the situation for Canadian POWs in Europe, for whom they raised \$10,000 to expand the next year's work.<sup>164</sup> They also put forth their earnest hope and belief that the POW services they provided would soon be adopted by the Japanese. This would not to be the case.<sup>165</sup> Also significant is that YMCA War Prisoner Aid was a joint endeavour of the International Committee of North America and the World Alliance of YMCAs, and as such, there were often differences of opinions on the priorities of immediate attention.<sup>166</sup> At this juncture of the war Canadian YMCAs retained a membership population of 51,258.

*The Yearbook and Official Roster of the National Councils of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada and the United States of America 1942*<sup>167</sup> reported a "first" for the YMCA. For the first time the War Prisoner Aid program asserted that the service to POWs was reciprocal in character, an important measure for every YMCA member to know and share. With upwards of 20,000<sup>168</sup> Canadian POWs overseas it might be assumed that the national council's priority would be supplying its own men, rather than the enemies POWs held in Canada.<sup>169</sup> The War Prisoner Aid for POWs in Canada reported in the 1942 yearbook that the financial request for the year was \$1,150,000.00, which it would collect directly from the National War Fund. As the YMCA was no longer allowed to canvas independently, they were in no position to raise

such vast amounts of funds. Eventually, they were given even more money than requested.<sup>170</sup>

This yearbook also holds the first mention of farm labour shortages and the potential use of German POWs to fill the void, both north and south of the border.<sup>171</sup> This is important for many reasons: (1) it aided in the feeding of Canadian citizens, and (2) it provided both pay and a form of “escapism” for German POWs in Canadian camps.

The yearbook of 1944 is in a stark contrast to its predecessors.<sup>172</sup> This yearbook reveals vital information relative to the Canadian YMCA’s plans as it stood on the brink of entering a new era in the history of YMCA programming. From a Canadian YMCA standpoint, YMCA war workers appear to have felt the need to award at least some focus on the Centennial (1845-1945). However, to official leadership the Centennial of their organization appeared no more important than the war itself. With sports increasing in popularity the YMCA War Prisoner Aid budgeted its work for the year at a figure of \$4,868,325.<sup>173</sup> Broken down, the budget allocated \$800,500 for employees expenditures, \$3,751,000 for general camp supplies (building materials etc.), and \$606,540 for sporting goods and supplies.<sup>174</sup> Although the Centennial issue was raised in many reports for the year 1944 it was evident that the Canadian YMCA would sustain its priority focus on its war work, more particularly, its War Prisoner Aid programming responsibilities.

The year 1945 was not only the year of the YMCA Centennial, but also the year of the end of WWII hostilities in Europe after the declaration of VE day in early May. Massive restructuring occurred in the YMCA worldwide, and War Prisoner Aid was not immune to the vast changes to come, nor were the plethora of associations across Canada. For Canadian YMCAs to move beyond war programming and into community programming the Canadian National Council of YMCAs made a two-step plan for the dismantling of the remainder of their war services programs. The first step was to “put its own house in order” by doing the following:

(1) develop a sound financial plan for the future, (2) modify all existing buildings and equipment, (3) encourage young people into management roles, (4) provide a better cross section of community into the leadership and director's board, (5) give special attention to YMCAs where operations appeared to be below standard, and (6) to clarify all membership policies. Their Second step was to "re-emphasize" the following: (1) the YMCA position in the community as a private religious organization, (2) its fundamental methods of work with individuals and groups, (3) the quality of its program, (4) leadership, recruiting, training and supervisors, and (5) its open platform policy for dealing with social and public issues.<sup>175</sup> The Canadian National Committee even outlined a list of eleven new areas of opportunity they should endeavour to implement at the war's end. However, the YMCA was still aware of its war work responsibilities, chief among them being to focus on overseas reconstruction conditions and attention to the recreation needs of soldiers awaiting return home.<sup>176</sup>

One sporting event worth noting was the Canadian YMCA's Dutch-Canadian Sports Week, which the YMCA National Committee believed would promote friendly feelings within the two groups, something which is still promoted in the Netherlands to this day in the country's remembrance of the liberation of their nation by Canadian troops. The Canadian YMCA recorded that over 20 communities participated in the event, and 125 major sports events were hosted during the one week of competitive sports.<sup>177</sup>

The year 1945 saw the donation of \$100,000 from the Canadian National Committee of YMCAs for YMCA War Prisoner Aid, funds which could now be channeled into non-wartime operations.<sup>178</sup> According to YMCA of Canada records, accompanying this funding was a large shipment of sporting supplies. The year 1945 also saw a War Prisoner Aid Report issued from the World Alliance of YMCAs, which stated plans for the immediate future. The first step was to

“constitute a committee of legal experts from England, France, Switzerland, Sweden and the United States to represent the interests of War Prisoner Aid for the World Committee of YMCAs in connection with the drafting or redrafting of a convention relative to the treatment of POWs.”<sup>179</sup> Secondly, to establish preliminary contacts with the proper officials of war offices and Red Cross societies across Europe, and, as well, to focus consideration on war prisoners and displaced persons in Japan, Australia, India, China, Korea, and Indonesia. The year 1945 distinctly shows the far-reaching arm of the YMCAs World Committee and the future of YMCA War Prisoners Aid performing much more than initially intended.<sup>180</sup> The War Prisoner Aid committee also wanted to appoint more Secretaries to Europe to make sure they were up-to-date with displaced prisoners in all regions. Of utmost importance for the World Alliance of YMCA War Prisoner Aid was the plight of patriated German POWs and displaced Germans, all of whom did not fall within the scope of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. The YMCA World Committee was not blind to the Communist threat and its possible effect on a Christian organization. As such, it strove to remain in close cooperation with the German YMCA to render services that the War Prisoner Aid program regularly dispensed. Also of priority was an effort to give aid to the military personnel guarding war and internment camps in eastern Germany and the USSR.<sup>181</sup> Such efforts truly indicated the neutral nature of YMCA War Prisoner Aid and its programming ideals, even after the conflict ended.

As has been demonstrated, the Canadian National YMCA had large involvement in programming for war work at more locations than merely at home. While the focus of Canadian War Prisoner Aid programming and its stated intent was focused on the welfare of allied POWs in captivity overseas, there is, in fact, another story to be told, a story of the German POWs interned in Canada and Jerome Davis’ dedication to serving their needs, and I propose to tell this

story in this dissertation. The Canadian YMCA was most seriously concerned with the welfare of the German POWs in Canada and as such they participated fully with the World Committee of YMCA War Prisoner Aid Programs. As stated it is the intention of this study to look beyond the mere evidence of sport programming offered through the World Alliance of War Prisoner Aid efforts and the representation of such aid to German POWs imprisoned in Canada between 1939 and 1945.

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> "Canada Prepared [to] Take Internees: Also German Prisoners-of-War Now in Britain Says King," *Lethbridge Herald*. (20 June 1940,) 10. Accessed January 13, 2017.  
<http://access.newspaperarchive.com.ezproxy.assembly.ab.ca/ca/alberta/lethbridge/lethbridge-herald/1940/06-20/>

<sup>2</sup> "Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Geneva, 27 July 1929." International Committee of the Red Cross, <https://www.icrc.org/en/copyright-and-terms-use>

<sup>3</sup> "Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Geneva, 27 July 1929." International Committee of the Red Cross, <https://www.icrc.org/en/copyright-and-terms-use>  
 Sec 2 Chapter 3 Article 17. And Chapter 3 Section 5 Article 56.

<sup>4</sup> David J Carter, *Behind Canadian Barbed Wire: Alien, Refugee and Prisoner of War Camps in Canada 1914-1946* (Calgary: Tumbleweed Press Ltd, 1980).

Canada interned Italian civilian internees, as well as Italian merchant seamen. However, the overwhelmingly vast majority of Canadian-held POWs were from the German military.

<sup>5</sup> John Joseph Kelly, "Der Deutsche Kriegsgefangener auf Alberta: Alberta and the Keeping of German Prisoners of War, 1939-1947. In *For King and Country: Alberta in the Second World War*, Ken Tingley ed. (Edmonton: Reidmore Books Inc, 1995), 293.

<sup>6</sup> Canadian YMCAs retained adherence to the Paris Statement of 1855 in which all YMCAs agreed to hold no outward political affiliations or to take sides in any political decisions or debate. This was not the case with American YMCAs however, with a passing of their own statements that allowed political affiliation and cause major inter conflict for the YMCAs of America with the outbreak of the Civil War.

<sup>7</sup> Murray G. Ross, *The YMCA in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1951), 260.

<sup>8</sup> Secretaries for the YMCA and its operations in no way refer to the definition of "secretary" in today's terms. A secretary in the YMCA was a director of a specific division of YMCA activities. For instance, each YMCA would have a secretary/instructor of sports programs, a secretary for religious programming, and so on. Each YMCA would also have a General Secretary who presided over the other Secretaries. This structured leadership was used in the world alliance as well in which there were General Secretaries for each division of works, and a General Secretary of the worlds committee, and lastly the president of the organization as a world-wide whole.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *World Service: A History of Foreign Work and World Service of Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and Canada* (New York: Association Press, 1957), 191.  
 Jon Thares Davisann, *A World of Crisis and Progress: The American YMCA in Japan, 1890-1930* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press: 1998), 100.

<sup>10</sup> C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the YMCA in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951), 411.

<sup>11</sup> Hopkins, 412.

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- <sup>12</sup> Jerome Davis, "Millions Behind Barbed Wire." *Survey Graphic* (August 1942): 347. Accessed October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016. Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits -13." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 105.
- <sup>15</sup> Carter.
- <sup>16</sup> Martin F. Auger, *Prisoners of the Home Front: German POWs and "Enemy Aliens" in Southern Quebec, 1940-46* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).
- <sup>17</sup> John Melady, *Escape From Canada: The Untold Stories of German POWs in Canada 1939-1945* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981).
- <sup>18</sup> Ted Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1989).
- <sup>19</sup> Ernest Robert Zimmerman, *The Little Third Reich on Lake Superior: A History of Canadian Internment Camp R*. Edited by Michael S. Beaulieu and David K. Ratz (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2015).
- <sup>20</sup> Davis, "Millions Behind Barbed Wire," *Survey Graphic*, August (1942,) 345-347.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits -13, Kananaskis -32, Ozada -45." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives.
- <sup>23</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives, 1.
- <sup>24</sup> Fonds 138, 264, 65, 244 and 382. "Heinz Krome Fonds, Rudolf Foehst Fonds, Reverend David Carter, Gunther Poppe Fonds, Karl Whal family Fonds, Jerry Glasgo Collection. Esplande Medicine Hat Archives.
- <sup>25</sup> Collection # Y-USA.42 Boxes: 11, 12, 27, 30, 39, as well as Y-USA.9.1 Box 48. Kautz Family Archives at the University of Minnesota Special Collections
- <sup>26</sup> Papers of Jerome Davis, Accession # 67-5, 67-19, MR 71-14 Photograph collections, and Mrs. Roosevelt's letters to Jerome Davis. Roosevelt Institute, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Archives.
- <sup>27</sup> Committee formed by Davis, for the oversight of his work in Canadian internment camps. They were under the authority of the International YMCA (USA) as well as under the umbrella of the World committee of Young Men's Christian Associations. Davis was the originator and creator of the Canadian Committee. He personally selected men who could further his influence with the Canadian government, as he himself was stationed in his role in Canada by the International World Committee of YMCA's and was an American rather than Canadian citizen. He was paid by the International Committee and was an American Citizen. Davis created the committee for three reasons. 1) for oversight 2) for government al influence 3) for fundraising up until 1942, the year in which the Canadian government released new rules for canvassing funds.
- <sup>28</sup> Hermann Boeschstein, Accession #B84-0014, Box 1-2, "Series I-III War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)," University of Toronto. University of Toronto Archives.
- <sup>29</sup> George, Yackulic. "Huge Sports Centre Here: Is Cloaked In Secrecy," *Lethbridge Herald*. (27 November 1943): 12.
- <sup>30</sup> Fretheim Kjetil, "Whose Kingdom? Which Context? Ecumenical and Contextual Theology in the Worlds Alliance of YMCAs." *International Review of Mission* 97:384-5 (April 2008), 119.
- <sup>31</sup> Kjetil, 120.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 125.
- <sup>33</sup> Johannes Van DER Ven, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993), 437.
- <sup>34</sup> Van DER Ven, 437.
- <sup>35</sup> John B White, "Sacramentally Imagining Sports as a Form of Worship: Reappraising Sport as a Gesture of God." *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*. 12:1 (2018), 9.
- <sup>36</sup> Definition of use in this dissertation: based on what is experienced or seen rather than on theory
- <sup>37</sup> The Christian ideas and teachings of John Calvin, especially the belief that God controls what happens on earth.
- <sup>38</sup> This refers to the simple structure of the Congregational Church structure. The Congregational churches although considered evangelical as well as a distinct denomination, hold no governing structure beyond that which each church decided for themselves. They believe by staying closer to the loose structure as described in the bible with the immediate directive of Christ to become apostles, they are more Intune with what the

church of Christ should be rather than a governance religious body. More on this will be discussed in the chapter on Jerome Davis.

<sup>39</sup> Benjamin A. Millard, *Congregationalism* (London: Constantinople & Company Ltd, 1913).

<sup>40</sup> Benjamin A. Millard, *Congregationalism*.

<sup>41</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 44 Internment Camp, Grande Ligne, Que War Diary, June 1940-June 1946: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'C' #20, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. War Diary, Jan 1943- April 1946: RG 24 , vols. 15, 403-15, 404.

Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Reports.

The reason as to why Quebec and internment camps located there is due to the fact that Quebec only held one POW camp (Grande Ligne) rather than interneers. It opened in 1943 and although Davis visited once, the camp was not yet holding POWs. Davis referred to the camp being established and that the grounds were adequate to make a good camp. This was learned in his second last official report #19. The only other sport reference pertaining to Grande Ligne and sports was a working report from the secret camp reports about construction gear being removed from the gymnasium before the arrival of the expected 500 German POWs. Such a lack of evidence would be pointless to add in the body work of this dissertation.

<sup>42</sup> Elmer L. Johnson, *The History of Y.M.C.A Physical Education* (Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1979), 132.

<sup>43</sup> Sherwood Eddy, *A Century with Youth: A History of the YMCA from 1844 to 1944* (New York:Association Press, 1944).

<sup>44</sup> Hodder Williams. *The Life of Sir George Williams* (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1906), 110. "G. Williams, C.W. Smith, Norton Smith, Edward Valentine, Edward Beaumont, M. Glasson, William Creese, Francis John Cockett, E. Rogers, John Harvey, John C. Symons, James Smith."

<sup>45</sup> Hopkins, 5.

Clyde Binfield, *George Williams and the Y.M.C.A.: A Study in Victorian social attitudes* (London: Heinemann, 1973), 298-99.

<sup>46</sup> Samuel Wirt Wiley, *History of YMCA-church Relations in the United States* (New York: Association Press, 1944).

<sup>47</sup> Hopkins, 172.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>50</sup> Harold C. Cross, *One Hundred Years of Service With Youth: The Story of the Montreal Y.M.C.A* (Montreal: Southam Press, 1951).

<sup>51</sup> Murray G. Ross, *The YMCA in Canada: The Chronicle of A Century* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1951), 9.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>53</sup> Colin K, Hatcher. *Y.M.C.A Edmonton: the first one hundred years* (Edmonton: Y.M.C.A of Edmonton, 2012), 10.

<sup>54</sup> Ross, 22.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>56</sup> Wiley.

<sup>57</sup> Ross, 45.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-62.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>62</sup> Hopkins, 427.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 426.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 209

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> "Proceedings Of The Twenty-Third Convention of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces Held at Baltimore MD, May 21-25, 1879." (New York: International Committee: 1879)

<sup>70</sup> "Proceedings Of The Twenty-Third Convention of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces Held at Baltimore MD, May 21-25, 1879," 34.

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- <sup>71</sup> Ibid., 39.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid., 48.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid., 65.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid., 77.
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid., 79-80.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid., 88.
- <sup>77</sup> Ibid., XXXIII-XXXVs.
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid., "Report of the Executive Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces," XLIX.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid., "Associations table," LVIII-LX.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid., CV.
- <sup>81</sup> Auger, 5.
- <sup>82</sup> Hopkins, 71.
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid., 85.
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>85</sup> "Proceedings Of The Tenth Convention of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces Held at Philadelphia, June 1865." (Philadelphia: The Executive Committee: 1865), 100, 25.
- <sup>86</sup> "Proceedings Of The Tenth Convention of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces Held at Philadelphia, June 1865," 25.
- <sup>87</sup> Ibid., 88.
- <sup>88</sup> Ibid., 116-117.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>90</sup> Hopkins, 89.
- <sup>91</sup> "Proceedings 1865," 99.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>93</sup> Ibid., 102-103.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid., 97.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid., 98.
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>97</sup> Hopkins, 89.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid., 90-91.
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid., 91.
- <sup>100</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid., 91.
- "Southern youth confined at the Federal prison at Johnsons Island Ohio, Irl Hicks, The prisoners farewell to Johnsons Island (pam, St. Louis: 1872), 3.
- <sup>102</sup> "Report of the Army and Navy Department of the International Committee" in Yearbook of The Young Men's Christian Associations of North America 1899 (New York: International Committee, 1899), 38.
- Hopkins, 452.
- <sup>103</sup> "Report of the Army and Navy Department of the International Committee." in Yearbook of The Young Men's Christian Associations of North America for the Year 1899 (New York: The International Committee, 1899), 39-59.
- <sup>104</sup> Ibid., 39.
- <sup>105</sup> Ibid., 41.
- <sup>106</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid., 42.
- <sup>108</sup> Ibid., 42-45.
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid., 45.
- <sup>110</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid., 46.
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid., 47.
- <sup>113</sup> Ibid., 47 & 55.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid., 56.



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- <sup>115</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>116</sup> Ibid., 59.
- <sup>117</sup> Hopkins, 259.
- <sup>118</sup> Ibid., 260.
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid., 259.
- <sup>120</sup> Ibid., 260.
- <sup>121</sup> Ross, 270.
- <sup>122</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>123</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>124</sup> Yearbook of the Young Men's Christian Associations of North America 1919-1920. (New York: Association Press, 1920), 15.
- <sup>125</sup> Ibid., 16.
- <sup>126</sup> Hopkins, 494.
- <sup>127</sup> Ibid., 486.
- <sup>128</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>129</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>130</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>131</sup> Ross, 273.
- <sup>132</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>133</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>134</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>135</sup> Ibid., 274.
- <sup>136</sup> Ibid., 275.
- <sup>137</sup> Ibid., 276-9.
- <sup>138</sup> Ibid., 280.
- <sup>139</sup> Yearbook of the Young Men's Christian Associations of North America 1919-1920, 84.
- <sup>140</sup> Ross, 290.
- <sup>141</sup> Yearbook of the Young Men's Christian Associations of North America 1919-1920, 85.  
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- <sup>143</sup> Bill. Waiser, *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1995).
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- <sup>145</sup> Eric. Koch, *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder* (Toronto: Methuen, 1980).
- <sup>146</sup> Charles W. Bishop, *The Canadian Y.M.C.A. in the Great War: The Official Record of the Activities of the Canadian Y.M.C.A. in Connection with the Great War of 1914-1918* (Canada: The National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada, 1924).
- <sup>147</sup> Alan, M. Hurst, *The Canadian Y.M.C.A. in World War II* (Canada: National War Services Committee of the National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada: 1948).
- <sup>148</sup> International Survey of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations (New York: The International Survey Committee, 1932).
- <sup>149</sup> Latourette, *World Service: A History of Foreign Work and World Service of Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and Canada*.
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- <sup>151</sup> Jonathan F. Vance, "Canadian relief agencies and prisoners of war, 1939-45." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 31. No.2 (Summer 1996), 133-147.
- <sup>152</sup> Ross.
- <sup>153</sup> Auger.
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- <sup>156</sup> Zimmerman.

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- <sup>157</sup> Jeff. Keshen, *Saints, sinners, and soldiers: Canada's Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).
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- <sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.
- <sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.
- <sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.
- <sup>167</sup> *Yearbook and Official Roster of the National Councils of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada and the United States of America 1942* (New York: Association Press, 1943).
- <sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.
- <sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.
- <sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.
- <sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.
- <sup>172</sup> *Yearbook and Official Rosters of the National Councils of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada and the United States of America 1944* (New York: Association Press, 1945).
- <sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.
- <sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>175</sup> *Yearbook and Official Rosters of the National Councils of the Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada and the United States of America 1945* (New York: Association Press, 1946), 139-143
- <sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.
- <sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.
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- <sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.
- <sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 165-6.

## Chapter Two: Jerome Dwight Davis: Congregationalist YMCA Aid Worker (1939-1943)

*“I want to state the pleasure it has been to be able to bring some light to the life of the men behind the barbed wire.”<sup>1</sup>*

Jerome Dwight Davis was the originator and primary moving force behind the early execution of World War II German POW athletic programming in Canada from 1939 to 1943. As such, it is appropriate to ask the question: Who was Jerome Dwight Davis? The answer is complex but is explained in part by revealing Davis’ lineage and early years. His first mission works, early YMCA work in Russia, and a brief description of his work during the interwar period (WWI-WWII) especially depict why Jerome Dwight Davis is a relevant figure in the historical study of the YMCA War Prisoner Aid program. A glimpse into Davis’ past signals his zeal for YMCA Prisoner of War aid in North America, and, also, reveals his Congregationalist resolve towards POWs and YMCA ecumenicalism.

To better understand Jerome Dwight Davis, one must examine his immediate family and his more distant ancestry in America.<sup>2</sup> A long and established family line in the colonization of America was something of which Davis was aware, and indeed proud. Perhaps most noteworthy being the legacies of Nathan Davis (1755-1835), John Woodbury (1726-1796), and John Davis (1750-1863). John Davis and John Woodbury fought in the American War of Independence, and both attained the rank of Captain.<sup>3</sup> It was the war hero legacy of these men and their military service that taught subsequent generations of Davis’ the ideals of courage, bravery, and a

commitment to God and country. There was a feeling of pride within the Davis family pertinent to where they had come from and what they had accomplished.<sup>4</sup> Jerome Dwight Davis' father, Jerome Dean Davis, sensitive to his family history, made sure his children knew the family's legacy. Jerome Dean Davis was a famous soldier and, arguably, the world's most famous missionary of his time.<sup>5</sup> He was a man who cast a long shadow, one which his sons sought to measure up to, especially in a religious, and spiritual sense.

### Jerome Dean Davis: Father to Jerome Dwight Davis, Director of YMCA War Prisoner Aid in Canada.

As impressive and heroic as his forebearers may have been, and even as their legacies were passed down to him in family stories, Jerome Dwight Davis' primary hero was his father, Jerome Dean Davis (1838-1910), who carved a legacy which his son felt inspired to emulate. Born in Groton, New York, Jerome Dean Davis grew up hearing of the heroic family stories of American Revolutionary Patriots Captains John Davis and John Woodbury. In 1853, following the death of his mother, the Davis family moved to Dundee, Illinois. There his father, Hope Davis, previously a primary teacher, lived a life of "stern Puritan morality"<sup>6</sup> in which character and intellect were derived from life rather than books. Having accepted Christ as his Saviour at the age of thirteen, Jerome Dean Davis committed his life to answering the question: "Where and how will my life amount most for Christ and for men?"<sup>7</sup> At fifteen, he took it upon himself to learn Latin, walking several miles once a week to study with a local teacher. He attempted to learn Greek on his own, a feat he would later accomplish while in the Seminary. He taught primary school locally as a teen until he was twenty years of age. Then he entered Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. Having decided to serve in a Christian ministry, the

following spring he attended Beloit College where he worked as a caretaker to cover his tuition and board.

Following the American Civil War battle of Bull Run in July of 1861, Jerome Dean Davis enlisted in the Union Army as a private in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Illinois Infantry. In April 1862 he was promoted to the rank of Second Lieutenant. He was cited for “conspicuous bravery”<sup>8</sup> in the battle of Shiloh at Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, where a bullet severed an artery in his thigh after he had picked up the regimental standard and rallied retreating troops. Having studied a medical book upon his enlistment, Davis was able to instruct his comrades in how to apply a tourniquet to his leg, after which he waited two days to be taken to the field hospital for his wound to be dressed. After six months of recovery, he returned to active service. By the end of the war in 1865, he had earned the rank of Colonel. Known as “the boy Colonel,” he was decommissioned from the army in July 1865.<sup>9</sup> The characteristics or qualities which Jerome Dean Davis inherited and developed during his four years of military service in the American Civil War were, according to his commanding officers and those who knew him well, attributes inherited from John Davis and John Woodbury. His wartime service may have prompted his awareness of the YMCA and its possible services to the Union army. The realization of the necessity for a soldier’s well-being, and how a relationship with the YMCA might help attain a state of well-being, may have been incurred in Davis’ son, Jerome Dwight Davis, by his father’s Civil War Experiences.

After leaving the military, Jerome Dean Davis returned to his studies and earned a two-year degree in Theology from Wisconsin’s Beloit University. He then entered the Congregational affiliated Chicago Theological Seminary in 1866. During his senior year, he served as a reverend and helped to construct a Congregational Church in Algonquin, Illinois. He

graduated from the seminary in 1869 and, accompanied by his first wife, became a home missionary in Cheyenne, Wyoming.<sup>10</sup> Together they served the wild frontier community for two years before leaving the mission in the hands of his cousin, Josiah Strong.<sup>11</sup> In 1871 Davis and his wife sailed for Japan as the third family to serve the Japanese missions for the American Missionary Board. Consequently, he served in the Japanese mission field for 39 years; during this time he established the first two Congregational Churches in Japan and founded the University of Doshisha, where he instructed Systematic Theology.<sup>12</sup> Systematic Theology encouraged him to believe he was finally serving his purpose of living his life in the full service of God and men.<sup>13</sup> Upon establishing the Congregational Churches in Japan, Jerome Dean Davis wrote the following:

In desiring to be united in faith and love with all the world who love our Lord Jesus Christ, we adopt the following as the basis of our faith. 1. Do you who are about to enter into this church feel that you have been sinners, and that you have believed and accepted Christ as your only saviour? 2. Do you love Christ above self and everything else, so that you are willing to give up and do whatever you feel that Christ requires? 3. Does the above basis of faith agree with your own belief so fully that you can work in perfect harmony with this church on that basis? 4. Are you ready to obey Christ in receiving the ordinance of baptism?<sup>14</sup>

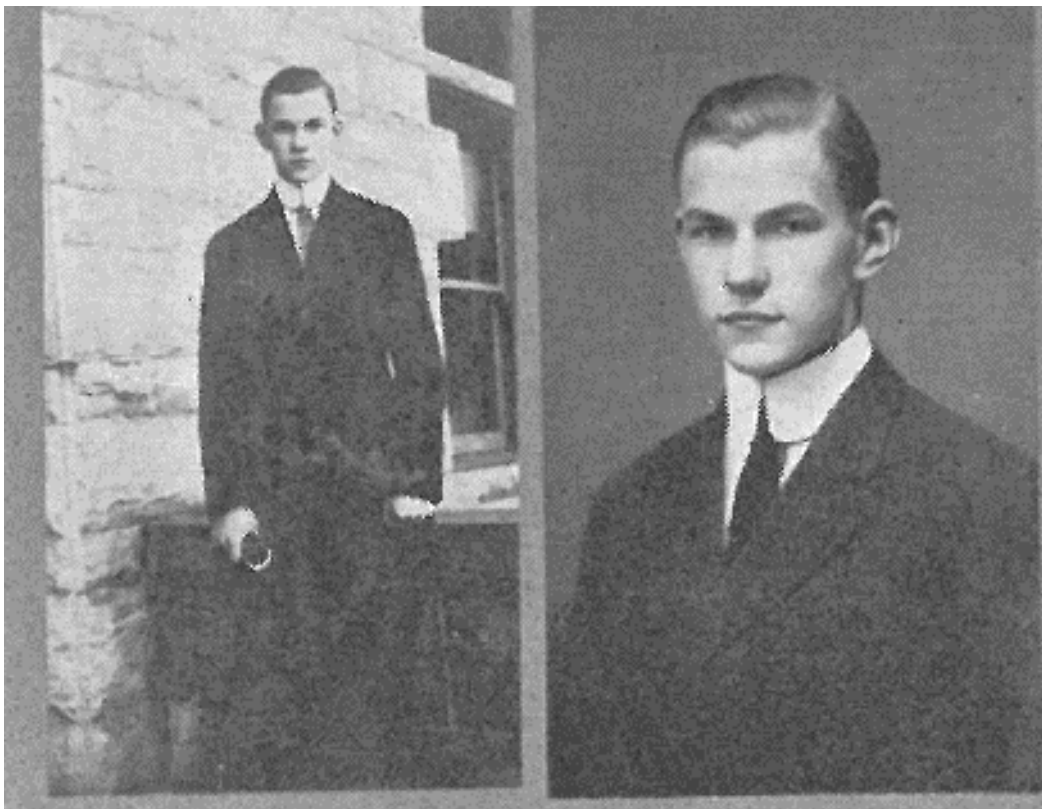
It was through this basis of faith that Jerome Dean Davis lived his life and strove to raise his children. It was later in life that Jerome Dean Davis took pride that four of his children, including Jerome Dwight Davis, continued his legacy of mission work on four different continents.<sup>15</sup>

## **Jerome Dwight Davis: Director of YMCA War Prisoner Aid in Canada**

Jerome Dwight Davis was born in Kyoto, Japan, on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1891. His father's second wife, Francis Nelson Hooper, was his mother. He grew up hearing stories of family

heroism in the American Civil war.<sup>16</sup> By 1929 Jerome Dwight's older brother John became the director of all YMCA operations in Japan.<sup>17</sup> Jerome's father and brother believed in a Christian education for all, irrespective of race, ethnicity, or means by which to attain it. Jerome Dean Davis had worked to earn his education, he expected the same from his children regardless of where they spent their formative years. According to many of Jerome Dwight Davis' archival materials, most particularly the President Franklin Delano Roosevelt archives in Hyde Park, New York, he went on from his formative years to live a long and public life.<sup>18</sup>

At the age of thirteen (in 1904) Davis was sent from his family in Japan to Newton High School in Newton, Massachusetts, and subsequently to storied Oberlin Academy in Oberlin, Ohio. During his high school and college years, Davis became an accomplished student. He joined the debate team and became the YMCA President for the Oberlin Academy YMCA branch.



*Figure 5 Jerome Davis (Courtesy Hi-o-H Yearbook Oberlin College 1914 Yearbook)<sup>19</sup>*

Davis graduated from Oberlin College in 1913; then worked for one year as a civil servant in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he advocated for half-holidays for factory workers. In 1914 he began studies at Union Theological Seminary in New York while simultaneously earning his doctorate in Sociology at Columbia University. In order to pay his tuition, he worked as a social worker for the Broadway Tabernacle and as a paid lecturer for the city of New York. In 1915 Davis spent his summer on-board the medical ship *Strathcona* plying the waters around Newfoundland and Labrador working as an assistant and secretary to Dr. Wilfred Grenfell, a medical missionary.<sup>20</sup> In Newfoundland and Labrador, Davis preached, taught, and helped ‘heal’ the local population many of whom were fishermen. It was during his summer with Dr. Grenfell who, by all accounts, was an adventurous man and popular lecturer in England, that Davis felt the profound effects of ministering to those in deepest need. There, also, Davis discovered the theologically-based goal of mission work. He came to realize that he could facilitate and alleviate need through the YMCA. He also became aware of the suffering occurring in war-torn Europe.<sup>21</sup> Upon his return to New York in the fall of 1915, Davis delayed his studies in order to begin his first mission to Europe under the neutral aid policy<sup>22</sup> of the World Alliance of YMCA War Prisoner Aid.

When Davis arrived in Europe in the fall of 1915 he was immediately sent by the YMCA War Prisoner Aid director in London, John R. Mott,<sup>23</sup> to Turkestan to work with German POWs interned by Russia.<sup>24</sup> After observing what he deemed to be atrocious conditions - poor sanitation, lack of food, rampant dysentery<sup>25</sup> - Davis instigated measures to improve sanitation drainage and general living conditions for the prisoners. However, he soon recognized that the conditions for the Russian soldiers guarding the camp were not much better. It was this awareness that spurred Davis in his personal venture as a YMCA missionary worker. He began



to make inroads into the Russian governing structures, allowing him, in time, to set up YMCA centers for Russian soldiers in Moscow, Petrograd, and at military posts across Russia, including those near the front lines.<sup>26</sup> When America entered World War I in 1917, Davis was placed in charge of all YMCA work in Russia.<sup>27</sup>



*Figure 6 World War I: Russian soldiers with two men (not in uniform) in front of YMCA facility in a Moscow suburb, which was started by Jerome Davis and Wheeler of the American Y.M.C.A., circa 1918. Jerome Davis Age 27, YMCA Work in Russia (Courtesy Alamy.com)<sup>28</sup>*

Following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, Davis and the YMCA were expelled from the USSR as Christianity and the YMCA's ties to the Orthodox Church were considered a threat to the state.<sup>29</sup> As a result, Davis returned to the United States.

Upon his return, Davis resumed his seminary studies, earning his Doctorate of Philosophy in 1922. It was during the interwar years (1920-1938) that Davis stepped away from YMCA work and entered academia, becoming an Assistant Professor in Sociology at venerable Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. Simultaneously professing at Dartmouth, he began

working with labor unions across America, and, more importantly, he became the chairman of several prominent committees. Notable amongst these was his chairmanship of the Social Service Commission of the Congregational Churches in America. It was during his chairmanship that the committee adopted a statement of social ideals, or credo that Davis held in highest regard.<sup>30</sup> Davis believed that it was the Congregational Church's non-adherence to specific congregational theology and creeds, together with the Church's congregants not being theologically trained but rather purely spiritual believers, that gave it strength.<sup>31</sup> Although devoted and motivated by religious purpose, he also realized that "Community spirit and civic boosterism [were becoming] the secular equivalents of the evangelical impulse that operated within religious settings."<sup>32</sup> According to Millard, Congregationalism attracts a certain type of evangelicalism. In Davis' case, his evangelical enlightenment facilitated his membership on several social committees and contributed to his seamless transition into the ecumenical context of the World Alliance of YMCA War Prisoner Aid.<sup>33</sup>

Davis left Dartmouth in 1924, becoming the Gilbert L. Stark Chair of Practical Philanthropy at Yale University, a position he held until 1936.<sup>34</sup> At the same time he worked for the New Haven Trades Council, and became Chairman of the Social Service Commission of the Protestant Churches of Connecticut. In 1932 he also became the Chairman of the Legislative Commission on Jails, during which he received a government grant of \$50,000 to study prisoner records and make recommendations on prison reforms. He was elected President of the American Federation of Teachers from 1936 through 1939, following which he returned to YMCA War Prisoner operations, becoming head of all YMCA War Prisoner Aid programs in Canada. The ensuing period of Davis' life prompts the investigation on which this dissertation rests.

It is important to note that for Davis and his work with those in need, in particular German POWs during their internment, “religious belief [was] not a kind of metaphysics, it [was] a performance, it [was] performed for others understanding.”<sup>35</sup> Davis understood that his efforts to help POWs was part of his zeal to “Christianize” German POWs. His sport programming and provision of sports equipment were underscored by his Christian spirit. Though he was operating a Christian charity through a Christian organization that was rapidly hastening toward secularization, there was no mistaking that Jerome Dwight Davis’ fundamental motives were aimed at Christian ethical aid.

Davis’ foundational background in the Congregational Church allowed him to see beyond theology, thus he based his work with POWs on “scriptural teachings” of the Bible. The YMCA was as an organization whose mission was based upon scriptures rather than any specific theology or doctrine.<sup>36</sup> The YMCA has consistently practiced ecumenical minimalism; convictions are determined by the social situation, rather than by pure faith in revelation.<sup>37</sup> Davis firmly believed that “when an establishment cannot morally justify certain practices, it must either change its morality or change the practice- a sort of moral revisionism.”<sup>38</sup> In this regard he believed that the disparagement of German POWs was not only wrong, but short-sighted. His firm views as regarding the provision of basic comforts as well as sport programming for POWs came directly from the YMCA and Congregational belief in scripture and ecumenical minimalism. However, Davis’ belief that sport could lead to conversion was slightly naïve, as the YMCA itself was as stated, hastening towards secularism.

For Davis to place such an emphasis on the provision of sport programming (and sport supply donation) to POWs can perhaps be reflected in light of the idea of providing ‘the comfort of home’ and his understanding that “sport is a persuasive signification that plays a powerful role

in shaping of cultural conceptions of identity, the body, and what constitutes to be human.”<sup>39</sup>

Above all, Davis saw German POWs as human beings, with human needs.

The YMCA has always been concerned with the morality of young men. When the YMCA began work with military organizations, attempts to curtail lust assumed a fever pitch.<sup>40</sup> By 1883 YMCAs had formed “The White Cross Army.”<sup>41</sup> Concerned with sex, it endeavoured to concern young men with personal purity rather than with “safe sex.” Attempts to hold safe sex courses in some branches were met with immediate rejection. However, men like Luther Gulick insisted on the need for sexual education through medical lectures and pamphlets on sexual hygiene.<sup>42</sup> By the end of WWI, given the conditions of men abroad, the World Alliance of YMCAs saw the futility of curtailing sex among men on leave from the front lines. Thus, “evangelism took the practical form of moralistic injunction against the evils of camp and disease-‘moral prophylaxis’ as well as physical.”<sup>43</sup> It is, however, important to note that the majority of YMCA leadership worldwide, and, most particularly, the YMCA Social Service Committee, were not in support of teaching safe sex and instead “promulgated that sport was a means of stifling lust.”<sup>44</sup> Such practices of promoting sport over safe sex were to continue far beyond the chronological dimensions of this dissertation.

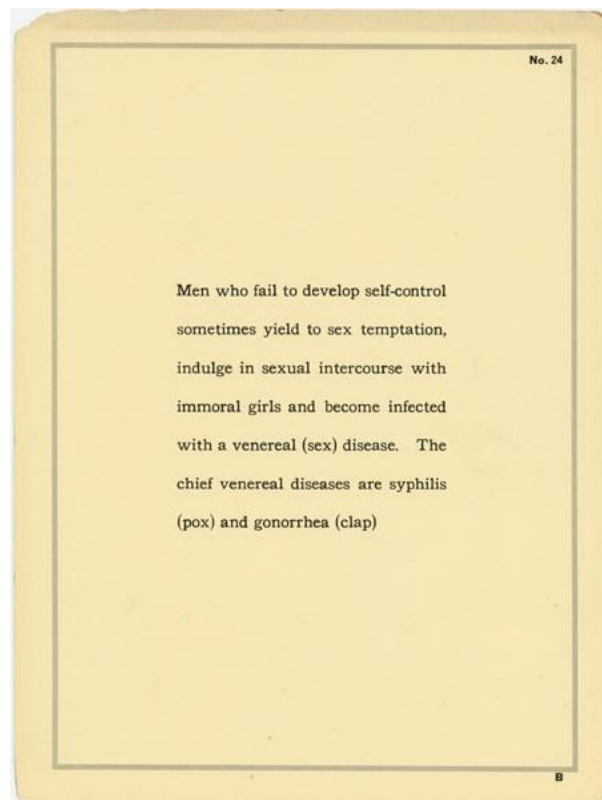
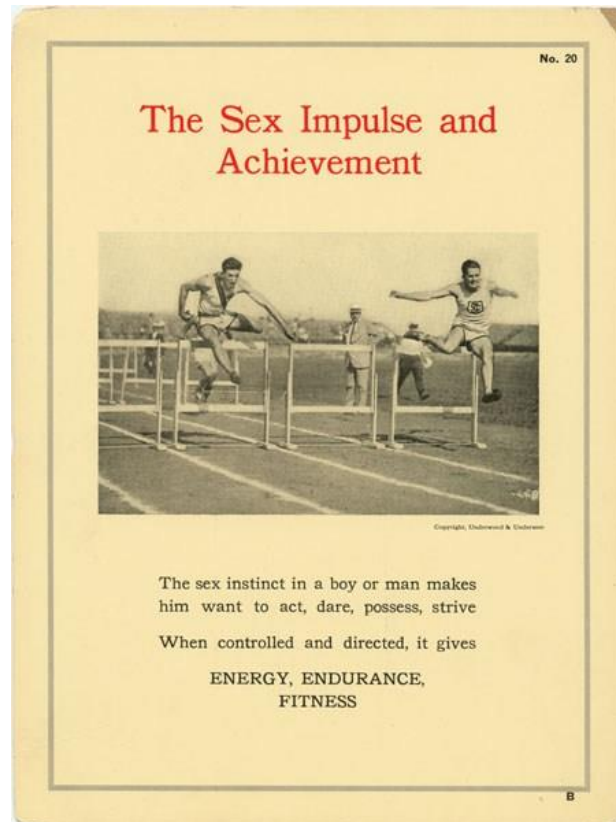


Figure 7 YMCA Abstinence Booklett page 20&24 (Courtesy Virginia Commonwealth University)<sup>45</sup>

However, one must consider that these arguments relative to safe sex and whether or not to place it in an educational perspective were only in reference to heterosexual relations, which was not a concern for men like Davis. Rather, Davis and others were more concerned with the immorality of homosexual relationships, and how to prevent them in the strictly male environment of POW camps across Canada. While there is no written evidence to show that Davis was particularly concerned about such relationships, he did, indeed, like his predecessors, promote sport over other programs, much like he promoted education and the political ideologies that the YMCA itself promoted through sport and education. Therefore, it is short-sighted to believe that Davis saw sport as solely a means of promoting healthy bodies, and/or occupying time that might otherwise be channeled towards plotting escape.<sup>46</sup>

Above all, with the knowledge gained from research into Jerome Dwight Davis, it is important to read his own words as to why he carried out YMCA War Prisoner Aid work.<sup>47</sup> Davis' Official Report Number Six, submitted on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1940, entitled "Serving the Prisoners of War in Canada," states: "The report that follows is a bare cold summary of the major things that have been done. But these statements must be translated by the reader into terms of living men – sons, fathers, husbands and brothers."<sup>48</sup> Davis wanted those he addressed to understand the human nature behind the face of the enemy. Davis also added that "it is not the things we give to the men which count but the spiritual values which result."<sup>49</sup> Oftentimes Davis overestimated the spiritual values resulting from sport promotion to German POWs. Regardless of what he delivered to German POWs in Canada, Davis was primarily a Congregationalist Reverend and Seminary-trained Christian, one who concluded his official reports with scripture and the words of Christ. Davis endeavoured to follow Christ's instructions to the letter. As written in the New Testament book of Matthew:

Matthew 25: 34-40

<sup>34</sup> Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

<sup>35</sup> For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

<sup>36</sup> Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

<sup>37</sup> Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

<sup>38</sup> When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

<sup>39</sup> Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

<sup>40</sup> *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*<sup>50</sup>

The previous discussion relative to Jerome Dwight Davis and his ancestry makes clear that his background preceding his WWI and WWII POW aid work exerted a profound impact on his beliefs towards helping those in need. Davis was not merely following the YMCA mandate of making men into Muscular Christians, ready to serve Christ. His decision to take part in military affairs, although he never served himself in the armed forces, is a reflection of his respect for military men and their military duty. Raised by a man who had forged a long and distinct heritage of military service, as well as raised by ancestral men and women pioneers who “carry[ed] the moral integrity and sterling devotion of their earlier [antecedents] into the then rapidly developing states,” helped Davis become a conscientious aid worker. Davis became a man who saw beyond simply the uniforms of POWs, men whose military service was dedicated to their nationalist cause. Similarly, he himself was dedicated to a cause: the aid and comfort of POWs in their hours of need.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 19. "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of February & March 1943."

<sup>2</sup> Frank Alanson Lombard, "Jerome Dean Davis: Patriot Missionary Man of God," *Envelope Series Quarterly* 14: 2 (1911), 5-6.

Davis' paternal grandmother (Brooksy Woodbury 1803-1846) could trace her ancestry to John Woodbury, who arrived in Salem, Massachusetts in 1620. His paternal great- great-grandmother, Elizabeth Phinney (1690-1786), could trace her lineage back four generations to Thomas Rogers, who arrived in America on the Mayflower in 1620. And, Davis' great grandfather (Dolar Davis 1593-1673) arrived in America in Boston in 1634.

<sup>3</sup> Lombard, 1-24.

The data, according to Lombard's Quarterly, suggests that John Davis was Jerome Dwight Davis' great-grandfather. However, when discovering the Davis family tree through ancestry.com it becomes evident that Nathan Davis rather than John Davis was Jerome Dwight Davis' great-grandfather. John Davis had neither record of marriage nor children, whereas Nathan Davis was married and had ten children, of whom Jerome Dean Davis' grandfather is the second youngest. Therefore I have made the assumption to correct the record in this thesis listing John Davis as great-uncle and Nathan Davis as great-grandfather. No record of military service for Nathan Davis can be found.

<sup>4</sup> Lombard, 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> J. Merle Davis, *Davis Soldier Missionary A Biography Of Rev. Jerome D. Davis, D.D., Lieut-Colonel Of Volunteers And For Thirty-Nine Years A Missionary Of The American Board Of Commissioners For Foreign Missions In Japan* (Boston: The Pilgrims Press, 1916):Foreword

"Shortly after his death, Dr. Davis' closest colleagues, notably, Dr. D. L. Learned and Dr. D. C. Greene, urged that his biography should be written. Secretary James L. Barton, of the American Board, and Dr. John R. Mott, of the International Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations [all large figures in the world missions committees] reinforced this opinion with their judgment that the story of [Jerome Dean Davis'] life should be told, as constituting an essential link in the development of the Kingdom of God in Japan."

<sup>6</sup> Lombard, 1-24.

<sup>7</sup> Lombard, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid 15.

<sup>12</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994): 22.

Systematic Theology is the study of theology and doctrine around a strong emphasis on the scriptural basis for each doctrine and teaching, clear writing with technical terms kept to a minimum, and a contemporary approach to the issues in any given society.

<sup>13</sup> Lombard, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>15</sup> Lombard, 22.

<sup>16</sup> J.B. Condliffe "John Merle Davis: In Memoriam," *Pacific Affairs* 34: 1 (1961): 66-71.

Jerome Dwight Davis' uncle John died on the second day of the battle of Gettysburg. His 15 years older half brother John was named in his honor.

<sup>17</sup> J.B. Condliffe "John Merle Davis: In Memoriam," 68.

<sup>18</sup> Papers of Jerome Davis, accession # 67-5, 67-19, MR 71-14 Photograph collections, and Mrs. Roosevelt's letters to Jerome Davis. Roosevelt Institute, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Archives. This and much of the following information is gleaned from an introductory biography provided by the Roosevelt archives in the accessioning of the Davis fonds.

Jerome Davis, a socialist was often labelled a communist considering his close ties to mission work and his relationship with men like Stalin and Lenin, both of whom he knew superficially. He was identified as such by



newspapers and went through a lengthy civil suit for libel which he won, but was rewarded little. It appeared Davis was more concerned with clearing his name than the money he was eventually awarded.

<sup>19</sup> Photograph (2) Jerome Davis, From Hi-o-H Yearbook Oberlin College 1914 Yearbook, Oberlin College Archives.

<sup>20</sup> Dr. Wilfred Grenfell, "Dr. Grenfell's Log," *Among the Deep Sea Fisheries*, vol. 13 Issue 4 (1916): 136-144.

<sup>21</sup> Johannes Van Der Ven, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993), 437.

<sup>22</sup> The YMCA pre-WWI had been a volunteer agency worldwide. It had been accepted by almost all national governments as a neutral agency that helped on either side of a conflict. It was nonpartisan and was therefore considered neutral in a time of war.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott: a Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979).

<sup>24</sup> Russia during the First World War had sided with other monarchies and became one of the allied powers, ruled over by the Romanov family (Tsar Nicolas II) Military disasters early in the conflict weakened the Russian Army. The influence of Gregory Rasputin over the Romanovs (it was believed he could heal their hemophiliac son) did public image damage to the royal family and in the spring of 1917, the Romanov family, were no longer in charge of Russia that had been taken over by a Provisional Government. In 1917, the Bolsheviks led by Lenin took power and introduced communist rule. The transition in the newly formed USSR occurred over the space of four years. All this occurred during Davis' tenure in the region. He was witness to some of the most ground-breaking world events in history.

<sup>25</sup> Jerome Davis, "Millions Behind Barbed Wire," *Survey Graphic*, August (1942,) 345-347.

<sup>26</sup> Matthew Lee Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture: The Preservation and Expansion of Orthodox Christianity 1900-1940* (Toronto: Lexington Books, 2013), 97, 124.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew Lee Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture*: 117.

Davis as a YMCA worker was placed in this position as there were only approximately five YMCA workers in Russia at the time. In charge originally in 1915 were A. C. Harte, senior secretary YMCA Russia, and George Day of the YMCA. Harte delegated his control to Acting Senior Secretary Jerome Davis, who worked in conjunction with Crawford Wheeler.

<sup>28</sup> Personal Collection. Purchased from Alamy.com.

<sup>29</sup> Miller, *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>30</sup> Roosevelt Institute, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Archives, Hyde Park New York.

<sup>31</sup> Benjamin A. Millard, *Congregationalism* (London: Constantinople & Company Ltd, 1913), 103.

<sup>32</sup> Steven J. Overman, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Sport: How Calvinism and Capitalism Shaped America's Games* (Macon: Mercer Press, 2011), 110.

<sup>33</sup> Fretheim Kjetil, "Whose Kingdom? Which Context? Ecumenical and Contextual Theology in the Worlds Alliance of YMCAs," *International Review of Mission* 97:384-5 (April 2008): 119.

<sup>34</sup> Judith Ann Schiff, "Firing the Firebrand," *Yale Alumni Magazine* (May/June 2005).

Davis left Dartmouth for a tenure track position at Yale Divinity School, to teach students Social Reform, responsibility and Justice. Instead he was fired as a junior professor over his views on Stalin and socialism.

<sup>35</sup> Van Der Ven, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach*, 5.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>37</sup> Benjamin S. Wall, "The Culture of Sport, Bodies of Desire, and the Body of Christ," *Journal of Disability and Religion* 21:2 (2017): 142-151.

<sup>38</sup> Overman, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Sport*.

<sup>39</sup> Wall, "The Culture of Sport, Bodies of Desire, and the Body of Christ," 143.

<sup>40</sup> C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the YMCA in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951), 385-386.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 385.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 517.

<sup>44</sup> Overman, 172.

<sup>45</sup> The sex impulse and achievement, YMCA Abstinence Booklet page 20&24, Virginia Commonwealth University.

<sup>46</sup> Davis, Jerome. Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes Diary 1942." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives. Politics and education: 26<sup>th</sup> February 1942, 11<sup>th</sup> May 1942. Escapes 27<sup>th</sup> May 1942, 30<sup>th</sup> May 1942.

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<sup>47</sup> Jerome Davis, "Report #6 "Serving the Prisoners of War in Canada," (15 November 1940) Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folder 8, Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office). University of Toronto Archives.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>50</sup> Verse 40 of Matthew 25 is a verse Davis often used in ending his official reports, either paraphrased or directly quoted. Davis used this parable to stress the importance of doing good for your enemies as it was commanded by Jesus.

## Chapter 3

### YMCA Sponsored Sport in the POW Camps of Ontario 1939-1943

*“this work is laying the foundation for building an enduring peace.”<sup>1</sup>*

A written depiction of sporting provisions and sponsoring of sport in Ontario-based POW camps from 1940 through 1943 is necessary to portray YMCA War Prisoner Aid through the leadership of Jerome Davis. Not all camps in Ontario were opened at the same time. In total, there were eleven that functioned between 1939 and 1946. These camps were not always entirely POW-populated; some inmates included Jewish refugees and classified enemies of the state. The following table depicts the camps that were in operation between 1940 and 1943 (the years of Davis’ leadership), which interned only German and a limited number of Italian POWs. Enemy merchant seamen were not classified as POWs until 1941; before that, they were often interned with civilians until they were transferred to POW camps. Due to unsubstantiated information regarding when and where merchant seamen were transferred, the chart below depicts POW camps that were in operation pre-classification of enemy merchant seamen and were continually populated only by POWs of military service to 1946. Also outlined below are the number of inspections Davis performed.

**Table 3. Ontario POW Camps Open by Year And # of Davis Inspections**

	1940	1941	1942	1943
Gravenhurst/Claydor	1	6	8	4
Espanola	0	5	3	0
Bowmanville		1	4	2
Neys		3	6	0

The following chapter inspects the records relating sport in the POW camps of the above table, beginning in their years of establishment to the end of Davis' tenure as YMCA War Prisoner Aid directorship in the spring of 1943.

### **Gravenhurst: Camp 20, Camp "C"**



*Figure 8 Camp Gravenhurst (courtesy the Toronto Star)<sup>2</sup>*

Gravenhurst Camp was one of Ontario's first established POW facilities, established in 1940 and, at the time, the largest POW camp in Canada. Davis cited Gravenhurst in his official

reports, his diary from 1942, and his unofficial handwritten notes. His visits were recorded multiple times in the Camp Daily Log<sup>3</sup> of commandants in supervision of Gravenhurst POW camp. This section will separate the Daily Log, Davis' personal hand-written notes, Davis' Official Committee Reports, and Davis' personal diary accounts in order to clarify the events that led to Davis' persistence in providing athletics for German POWs in each of Ontario's four POW camps. Separating these sources will allow for the comparison of Davis' official statements from his own thoughts expressed in the hand-written notations, and the commandant views of Davis reported in the camp Daily Logs. Comparing the requests issued by Davis, with the facilitation as recorded by Davis as well as the official records.

### **Daily Log, Camp Gravenhurst, 1940- Spring 1943**

The first pieces of evidence to dissect are the camp Daily Logs (as classified by the commandant's office as Secret War Diaries)<sup>4</sup> on Davis' visits to Gravenhurst, which began in October of 1940, five months after Gravenhurst Camp had officially been opened. Daily Log reports filed by the camp commandant reveal that Davis visited twenty times between 1940 and the spring of 1943. Davis' first visit commenced on 14 December 1940. The Daily Log reported, "Dr. Jerome Davis, Representative of War Prisoners' Aid Y.M.C.A., visited Camp at 0900 hrs., discussed matters of further Aid to P/W with camp commandant and P/W camp leader: Arranged to obtain further articles such as skates and boots, left Camp by train at 1425 hrs."<sup>5</sup> If nothing else, the Daily Log demonstrates his attention to the sporting needs of POWs at Gravenhurst during his very first visit. It also demonstrates that Gravenhurst was well underway towards building up a stock of athletic gear, particularly skates and appropriate winter footwear for the winter months. Between Davis' first and second visits to Gravenhurst, the Daily Log reported

that the head Red Cross representative, Ernest L. Maag, visited the POW camp and inspected the compound as well as the prisoner-constructed skating rink. This furthered the claim of POWs' need for skates and Davis' acknowledgement that provision of skates was an immediately necessary endeavour to facilitate.<sup>6</sup>

Davis' second visit to Gravenhurst Camp occurred on 8 February 1941. The Daily Log documented that "Dr. Jerome Davis Sec'y for Canada of War Prisoners Aid of Y.M.C.A., with Mr. Lehmann, representative of Mennonite Sect returning to Germany, arrived in Camp." This followed with Davis' recommendation to move the talking picture shows (supplied by the Y.M.C.A.) to be held in the recreation hut for the evenings,<sup>7</sup> thus demonstrating that he was well aware that, at times, sport recreation activities needed to take a back seat to other entertainments, sometimes requiring the use of the athletic facilities.

Following the December request for skates, the Daily Log for the month of January 1941 mentions the completion of a skating rink constructed on the compound grounds.<sup>8</sup> Following closely on Davis' visit on the 8 February 1941, RCMP representative of the district, Inspector Joseph Howe, examined the POW skating rink on 20 February, taking pictures of the prisoners skating.<sup>9</sup>

Davis' third visit to Gravenhurst in May 1941, does not discuss sport but states he conducted, morning and afternoon interviews with the camp leader and the camp commandant. The camp leader was Davis' main source for receiving material requests from POWs, as well as the intermediary for evaluating complaints, which, in turn Davis passed on to the commandant, a process of which we will later see in more detail.<sup>10</sup>

Between Davis' third and fourth visits to Gravenhurst on 24 May 1941 and 12 June 1941, there was a baseball game in the town park. Gravenhurst's senior Chaplain attended the game

and apparently came back to camp sharing the highlights with this fellow officers.<sup>11</sup> This indicates that a well-rounded sporting culture (in baseball) was also developing in the town of Gravenhurst, perhaps even more so than within the POW compound, and that those who worked within the commandant's office were more interested in the events of the town close by than the sport activities of the POWs.

Davis' fourth visit to Gravenhurst occurred on 12 June, 1941. Davis "called at the camp and left several articles of sporting goods for P/Ws. He was not able to see camp leader owing to Inspection in Progress: Visit not Official."<sup>12</sup> It appears that Davis sometimes appeared at camps unannounced if the camp was located near the route of his travels. This practice allowed him to dispense goods he had acquired. There is no doubt that he attempted to meet with the camp leader, who usually signed-off on the acceptance of the goods (which was standard procedure following the commandant's acceptance). However, this was not always the case as is seen in the instance above. Nevertheless, this does not negate the fact that Davis knew what was required at Gravenhurst and provided whatever sporting goods he could if and when they became available.

Between Davis' fourth visit in June and his fifth visit in July, we learn about an Officers vs. Sergeants baseball game 19 June 1941. Sporting goods were not only desired and needed by the POWs, but also by those responsible for guarding them. Whether or not Davis facilitated issue of sport supplies through the YMCA to the guards is unknown, but does demonstrate he was aware of the guards sorting and supply needs.<sup>13</sup> If Davis did supply the guards, it meant that Davis had a much larger circulation base through which to supply sporting goods. And this prospect even though the military itself appointed officers who operated and facilitated sport programs for all divisions of the military at the time.

Davis' fifth visit to the Gravenhurst Camp (July 1941) did not generate a citation of value. It is possible that the biggest event of importance for the Gravenhurst Camp for the month was on 22 July 1941, where the commandant's report reads: "Prisoners of War began evening football games on sports field – Weather – fair and warm, sultry."<sup>14</sup> The start of summer, evening soccer matches instigated increased requests for leather patch kits (as barbed wire would often puncture soccer balls gone astray), as well as for new soccer footballs and appropriate footwear.

Later that summer, on 20 August 1941, Davis brought Sir Ernest McMillian (Chairman of Canadian YMCA War Prisoner Aid Committee) with him to inspect the Gravenhurst POW compound, where they visited and admired the sports fields and tennis courts.<sup>15</sup> Davis returned five days later.<sup>16</sup> He arrived in the afternoon, conferred with the camp commander, and interviewed the camp leader, he perused the same visitation pattern for his visit of 21 October, 1941.<sup>17</sup> There is no record as to what discussions took place, but it seems likely with the ending of summer football, the requests for goods may have shifted to supplies more suitable for the upcoming winter.

The Gravenhurst Daily Log for the year 1942, as well as Davis' Official Reports hold a plethora of information. Davis visited the camp eight times in 1942. It is evident that a multitude of sporting activities were taking place, for which Davis attempted to provide goods. On 8 January 1942, the POWs were preparing the outdoor skating rink—nicknamed "the yard"—"for all [of] us troops and P/Ws."<sup>18</sup> Hence, the rink was not just for the POWs, but also the camp guards. On 9 January 1942, the rink was opened for the first time that season, as recorded by the camp commandant's office.<sup>19</sup>



Aside from the POW skating activities, a glimpse of the sporting activities of some of the camp guards is also provided by the Daily Log. On 25 January 1942, the officers of the camp guard formed a curling team, which took part in the small town of Gravenhurst's bonspiel.<sup>20</sup> It is important to once again note that there was a sporting culture in and around the Gravenhurst POW Camp that extended beyond the POWs themselves. As such, at times, Davis may have attempted to supply the guards with their own sporting equipment. It is following the curling event that Davis makes his first 1942 visit to the camp. On 7 February during this visit, Davis witnessed some of the activities that POWs pursued other than sports. We read that Davis was treated to "special entertainment in compound."<sup>21</sup> As Gravenhurst Camp had an orchestra as well as an active drama team, Davis witnessed a rehearsal production of some sort. Davis' second visit of 1942 did not occur until three months later on 6 May 1942.<sup>22</sup> During Davis' short visit to the camp, increasingly overcrowded conditions were a hot issue, some POWs were shipped to Farnham, Quebec, a camp located 50 kilometers East of Montreal. As the men were departing, their goods and baggage were inspected and the record notes that a particularly thorough search of the sporting goods was performed at the same time that the camp barrack stores were being reviewed as well.<sup>23</sup> Sporting goods were something POWs did not want to relinquish once they had possession of them, and they would take those sporting goods with them from camp to camp. It also appears that camp officers, as well as the commandant's office, wanted a regular accounting of sporting goods in order to have some knowledge as to how much sporting supplies they might need to request and receive in the future.

Davis' next visit came a mere month later (6 June 1942). This time Davis sat down for a meeting with the elected POW camp leader and his committee chairman.<sup>24</sup> Knowing Davis met with the chairman of committees is an important piece of information, as it demonstrates that the

POWs had a form of self-government in place. With various activities and the associated need for required supplies in Gravenhurst Camp, the POWs themselves appointed or elected committee representatives for activities and departments concerned with sports, education, drama, etc. A committee chairman was expected to be able to convey to Davis the specific needs of the camp far better than if Davis received requests from individual prisoners.

The next sporting event reported from Gravenhurst Camp occurred on 12 June 1942. POWs were permitted to have a swim in nearby Lake Muskoka.<sup>25</sup> On 27 June 1942, the “swimming parties [were] well patronized” as 25 POWs escorted by guards were out for a morning swim. Fifty POWs participated in the afternoon swim.<sup>26</sup>

The month of July 1942 was a busy sporting month at Gravenhurst Camp. On 1 July a baseball game was held on the camp grounds featuring officers versus sergeants of the Canadian Veterans Guard.<sup>27</sup> On 8 July 1942 Davis visited Gravenhurst and met with the camp leader, the committee chairman, and three other POWs, but what they discussed has not been preserved.<sup>28</sup> On 13 July a heatwave hit the province. The camp seemed particularly affected, as the report states that swimming parties were very popular, with the guards taking hurried dips as well in order to cool off.<sup>29</sup> On 15 July 1942 an interesting event occurred. The camp report states two things: 1) the fishing expedition of the POWs was cancelled for the day,<sup>30</sup> and 2) the reason behind the fishing party being cancelled was the discovery of an escape plan. The guards on patrol discovered hidden food as well as a hose system/breathing apparatus, leading them to believe an attempted escape underwater was planned for the day; all subsequent fishing parties were cancelled. It is little wonder that the POWs who sought to escape would try to do so on one of the many outings that the POWs of Gravenhurst were privileged to have. In a 28 July 1942 account we learn that “P’s.O.W. began water polo matches during swimming periods having

constructed goal-posts in water near bathing beach the previous day,” as well as “commandant inspected the barbed wire boom in lake which has been reported in need of repair for some time.”<sup>31</sup> The attempted escape was not severe enough to cancel all swimming parties but was enough to make the commandant wary of the safeguards in place to prevent escape. This demonstrates that he was aware the most likely escape plans were to mesh with recreation/sport events occurring outside the camp compound.

On 1 August 1942 the record notes another escape attempt during the morning swimming party was noted.<sup>32</sup> When the returning party was counted, two prisoners were reported missing. Guards’ returned to the lake and the missing POWs were discovered buried under the sand, along with food and clothes for the planned escape. This episode cancelled further swimming parties. Davis’ visit three days later, in which he met with three of the senior POW officers in the presence of the camp interpreter, demonstrates how the previous two escape attempts had created a distrust between the POWs and the commandant.<sup>33</sup> The meeting could have been an intervention on the part of Davis to bridge the rift between POWs and the commandant. Fourteen days later the camp leader (elected from within the POW ranks) addressed a letter to the commandant giving his and his fellow officers’ word of honor that there would be no more escape attempts from POWs during the swimming parties, if reinstated.<sup>34</sup> Undoubtedly, the stagnant boredom in camp was heightened, along with the August heat. On 19 August, the commandant responded with new security guidelines and necessary guarantees regarding swimming outings and all sports. An agreement of outside camp behaviour was then signed by the camp leader.<sup>35</sup>

Davis’ return to the camp on 1 September 1942 led to a translator-supervised visit, which demonstrates that the commandant, despite POW guarantees, remained skeptical of the POWs

conduct and, in a sense, perhaps not entirely trusting Davis either.<sup>36</sup> The meeting may have resulted in new camp rules as the next day the commandant summoned the camp leader to issue new orders in which rules regarding parole walks permitted for officers were changed towards the presence of more supervision. On 11 September, the Canadian Inspector General arrived in camp and agreed with the commandant that the camp was overcrowded and required more space for sports activities. The necessity to have the POWs leave the compound to participate in sports was obviously a concern for the Inspector General in light of the recent escape attempts.<sup>37</sup>

By September 1942, the citizens of nearby Gravenhurst registered concern over the nearby presence of POWs. Officers allowed on a parole walk were accosted by an angry woman who charged the guard to “take the beasts away!”<sup>38</sup> It was discovered by the camp record keeper that when the camp guards restrained the woman they learned that she had just lost her son at Dieppe. Indeed, the general population of Gravenhurst was becoming more aware of the German camp just outside their community; some were unsympathetic to the idea of having German POWs in their midst.

The beginning of October 1942 is important in relation to POW sport at Gravenhurst. From 1-3 October, POWs held a three-day Sportfest.<sup>39</sup> This attested to the fact that sports were not only important to POWs but was a significant part of Camp life for a large number of prisoners. Organizing of a three-day Sportfest was a significant undertaking. A 3 October report read: “sports continues in enclosure and final preparations [are] made for party on Sunday evening.”<sup>40</sup> The party ended the three day event, Davis’ personal notes demonstrate the increased amount of sporting goods he supplied in advance of the sportfest.

It is important to note that Davis was not the only sport request facilitator for the athlete POWs. Ernest L. Maag, representative of the Red Cross’ prisoner camp inspection team, arrived

at Gravenhurst on 6 October 1942, taking “away with him an impossible list of sporting goods... which the Ps.O.W. are demanding.”<sup>41</sup> Four days after Maag’s inspection, Davis arrived “at camp at 1100hrs, and conferred with camp leader and 8 other P/W officers on matters of sport.”<sup>42</sup> It may be that the POWS reported the events of mere days before, requesting supplies to replace some equipment that may have been worn out in the process of the Sportfest. The following day, Davis again visited to conduct the scheduled church service.<sup>43</sup>

Although Davis visited regularly, this does not mean that other communication forms, such as letters, were not sent to Davis from the POW camps. On 5 November 1942, Gravenhurst’s camp leader sent a letter to Davis through the Canadian YMCA head office in Toronto, reported on the lack of supplies available for purchase at the camp canteen.<sup>44</sup> On December 4<sup>th</sup> a contingent of POWs were sent to Farnham to relieve the camp’s overcrowding situation and, once again, sporting equipment leaving the camp was reported, leading to an inventory of POW stores.<sup>45</sup> Davis made his last trip of 1942 to Gravenhurst Camp on 10 December. During this visit he provided gifts for Christmas; sporting goods may have been amongst the gifts.

In the early days of 1943, evidence bearing on Davis in a negative light within the Daily Log begins to appear. The report of 19 January 1943 reads that Davis conferred with POW leaders on educational and recreational concerns. However, “as usual, Dr. Davis attempted to trade in a number of articles that had no connection whatever with education or recreation and a large part of his interview was more like that of a super salesman of large merchandising outfit.”<sup>46</sup> It appeared that the commandant did not appreciate goods for POWs outside the realm of the educational and recreational goods they were requesting. Davis apparently heard the message loud and clear, as evidenced by the report from 26 January 1943. Davis sent a letter to

Gravenhurst Camp regarding the YMCAs dedication to provide supplies to assist the POWs in the building of a classroom in one of their camp huts. A response letter was written by the camp leader, asking Dr. Davis to limit his future actions to the supplying of recreational requirements only.<sup>47</sup>

Nearing the end of Davis' tenure as Canadian representative of YMCA war prisoner aid in the spring of 1943, on 11 February the camp leader held a special meeting with the camp commandant "to discuss certain details of camp administration and sports activities."<sup>48</sup> The very next day "P.O.W. working parties began clearing snow from [the] sports field."<sup>49</sup> It appeared that even the cold winter months could not dampen the sporting enthusiasm of the POWs at Camp Gravenhurst. Davis visited the POWs at Gravenhurst two more times before the end of his tenure. Both times, on 17 February<sup>50</sup> and on 9 April,<sup>51</sup> he conferred with the camp leader, the camp commandant, and several other officers. None of the meetings held content that the commandant felt obligated to record.

The sum of the Daily Log written by the staff of the camp commandants office demonstrates how lively the camp sporting life was between 1940 and the spring of 1943. The sheer amount of notations relative to requests and facilitation of sporting goods provided by Davis as the YMCA War Prisoner Aid representative, as well as the reported of the POWs' involvement in sports, demonstrates how critical Davis' role was in providing sporting goods to the POWs at Camp Gravenhurst during their incarceration.

### **Davis' Personal Hand-Written Notes, Gravenhurst, (1940-1943)**

Davis' handwritten notes do not contain much information pertaining to Camp Gravenhurst's requests for sporting goods. An extensive investigation into finding such a corpus

of notes has produced little to no results. Davis instead applied more of his personal notes on the sporting needs of Ontario's camps at Bowmanville and Neys.<sup>52</sup>

### **Davis' Official Committee of War Prisoner Aid in Canada Reports, Gravenhurst, 1940-1943**

Davis mentions Gravenhurst Camp seven times in his official reports to the War Prisoner Aid Committee of Canada, the Canadian Department of Defence, and the World Alliance of YMCA War Prisoner Aid Committee. The first of his reports submitted 16 December 1940 declares: "I visited Camp "C" Gravenhurst. They have received the Christmas parcels and are planning to have a good Christmas party. They are requesting me to send in skates for the camp. I have arranged to have these sent in."<sup>53</sup> In Davis' first official report, too, he mentioned the Daily Log that confirmed that he specifically cared about the sporting needs of POWs in Canada from the outset of his duties. The report also signified that Davis had been fulfilling some of his official duties before he was required to write official reports. Previous reports were written by Dr. Conrad Hoffmann. (Hoffman, Senior Secretary of the War Prisoners' Aid in Germany from 1915 to 1919, worked with German POWs and the YMCA's War Prisoners' Aid of Canada in World War II.)

Davis' second direct reference to Gravenhurst POW Camp comes directly from Report #8, submitted on 1 August 1941. Entitled "Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Month of July 1941,"<sup>54</sup> Davis reported "at least three of the prisoner of war camps have swimming. They have a diving board, water polo and enjoy swimming sports immensely. We are trying to meet all the other athletic needs of the men." As we have seen, the previous Daily Logs confirm this and proves that Gravenhurst, although their water polo facility was not in place until the summer of 1942, provided multiple swimming parties in the summer of 1941. Davis Report

#8 went on to pronounce that the YMCA War Prisoner Aid had provided “eight hundred dollars’ worth of equipment for each of the camps,”<sup>55</sup> a substantial sum in early 1941. However, we must also take into account that Davis provided sporting goods to the Canadian Internment and Refugee camps as well, which increased the YMCA War Prisoner Aid budget far beyond that which was specifically spent on POWs.

Davis’ Report #9 described “An inventory of the needs of an average camp of five hundred men.”<sup>56</sup> The athletic expenditure report attached follows:

#### SUGGESTED STANDARD ATHLETIC EQUIPMENT FOR A CAMP OF

##### 500 MEN

Skating:	Skating rink	
	24 pairs of skates and boots.....	\$123.12
	12 extra pairs of shoes laces 63”.....	0.90
	48 Hockey sticks.....	30.80
	6 Pucks.....	0.40
	4 Goal sticks.....	6.93
	12 Rolls black tape 1/2lb. rolls.....	7.20
	2 sets goal keepers leg protectors.....	14.26
	2 body protectors.....	10.00
	24 Athletic supporters.....	14.40
	24 Aluminum cups for above.....	15.32
Tennis:	1 Tennis net.....	10.50
	1 Reel for net.....	0.75
	1 Set of marking tapes.....	5.25
	8 Tennis Racquets.....	24.00
	8 Presses for racquets.....	3.92
	1 dozen tennis balls.....	3.60
	4 rolls wire back stops.....	17.76
	1 Water roller.....	13.00
Football:	6 Footballs.....	30.00
	24 Pairs of football shoes.....	72.49
	1 Gross cleats for shoes approx.....	2.50



Gymnasium: Parallel bars.....	285.00
Horizontal bar.....	85.00
Horse (vaulting box).....	90.00
2 Mats 6ft. x 12ft. ....	129.60
2 Punching bags .....	12.00
1 Training bag filled with sand .....	5.00
4 prs training gloves .....	14.80
2 Stall bars.....	55.00
Gymnasium pulley weights .....	42.50
Miscellaneous: 6 Fistballs [sic] #3 .....	21.00
2 Volleyballs .....	8.00
1 Volleyball net .....	5.25
6 Ping-pong Nets .....	1.50
3 doz. Ping-pong balls .....	2.25
1 doz. Ping-pong Bats .....	6.00
3 Ping-pong Tables .....	36.15
1 Extra bracket .....	0.25
12 Pairs of Posts for Ping-pong nets .....	3.00
4 pairs of Boxing Gloves 8oz. ....	30.00
240 ft. Rope 1 ¾' thick (for boxing ring) .....	29.70 (approx)
24 Pairs running shoes .....	11.75
Sizes 7-8-9-10 & ½ sizes	
10 Expanders (5 strand) .....	31.50
Weight lifting bar .....	28.00
1 Disc (aluminum) .....	8.75
1 Shot-put (iron) .....	2.35
1 Croquet Set .....	2.95
2 Sets Horse-Shoes aprox .....	6.00
<u>Total</u>	
<u>\$ 1,360.40</u>	

Monthly Requirements:

3 Football.....	\$ 15.00
10 Ping-pong balls (in winter).....	<u>0.75</u>
<u>\$15.75</u>	

Every Three Months:

4 Pairs of Boxing gloves ..... \$30.00<sup>57</sup>

Although tennis, swimming, and soccer (football) were by far the most popular, they were certainly not the only sports in which POWs participated; in fact, the monthly expenditure on boxing supplies as well as gymnastic equipment proves that Davis took the sporting needs of POWs extremely seriously. As is evidenced by expenditure of over one thousand dollars.

Davis' next mention of Gravenhurst is recorded in Report #15. He revealed that Gravenhurst had officially become an officers camp, and with the increased volume of prisoner transfers, reported in the Daily Logs, "each group of prisoners of war are transferred from one camp to another they naturally take all their educational, recreational, musical and other supplies with them, which means one has to start at rock bottom to equip a new camp."<sup>58</sup> Davis' notes were a confirmation of the Daily Logs that all sporting equipment of the transferred POWs needed to be searched before departure. His notes also stressed the importance of the YMCA War Prisoner Aid in replacing the goods that went with the men.

Davis also needed to be concerned that the committees receiving his reports knew of the need for constant donation and fundraising to the War Prisoner Aid budget, as their expenses were increasing, with the arrival of each new POW shipment and the expansion of programs resulting from the building of new camps. In Report #15, too, Davis mentions that "the prisoners in [Gravenhurst] have spent a lot of their own money in making improvements in the grounds and in the athletic fields."<sup>59</sup> Davis mentioned this as an appeasement to officials of the YMCA Committee. He well knew that the prisoners were a major cost expenditure for both the government (federal budget) and the YMCA (through citizen donations). Thus Davis attempted to demonstrate that, although the costs were great, the POWs were doing their part in making

their accommodations better than merely basic by spending their own monies on improving sports grounds.

Davis' Report #16 mentions Gravenhurst specifically<sup>60</sup> Davis made his monthly rounds. and reported on the conditions of the Gravenhurst POW Camp, he noted that "the officers were particularly desirous of having the barbed wire extended to include the athletic field. This is now being done...at the present time they have tennis courts, a football and track field."<sup>61</sup> As per the Daily Logs, the POWs at Gravenhurst attempted escapes during the summer of 1942. Consequently, all outside athletic trips were cancelled. As the football/soccer field and majority of sport-related events were held outside the compound, it made sense that the POWs wished for the athletic grounds to be located within the camp compound. Such a request was also favorable to the guards and the camp commandant, as it allowed sports and various athletic opportunities to occur without the added risk of constant escape attempts and increased guard duties. Davis supported, the athletic field extension. He felt the punishments for attempted escapes were harsher than necessary.

Report #18 for the months of December and January 1943 reported that "The men need a lot of supplies in this camp because I have not been in [it] for some time and I was very glad to do what I could to arrange the educational, musical and recreational facilities in the camp."<sup>62</sup> Davis, received permission from the YMCA to leave his post as the YMCA War Prisoner Aid representative in Canada, handed the job over to Hermann Boeschstein, in late 1943.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, Davis' last report (#20) is a co-written report with Boeschstein on their only joint visit to POW camps. Davis and Boeschstein reported that Gravenhurst Camp had "in the field of athletics, a field seventy seven by fifty five yards; a boxing ring; a tennis court and a skating rink."<sup>64</sup> Boeschstein made a detailed appendix to his section of the report in which he

enumerated a precise accounting of all sporting goods at each camp as reported to him by each commandant's office. This was unlike Davis, who usually listed multiple donations of sporting goods without an accounting for what he was replacing or adding to the sport holdings of a camp. Boeschenstein, a businessman, did not approve of Davis' style of leadership. Even though Davis' "style" appears to have been well accepted by officials, as reflected in well wishes and thank-you notes from camp commandants and POWs as he prepared to depart from the scene. Camp leaders in particular thanked him for the YMCA's devotion to the provision of goods to the POW camps.

### **Davis' Personal Diary, Gravenhurst, 1942**

Davis made four specific reports concerning his visits to Gravenhurst in the year 1942. In his personal diary, the first account occurred on the 13 March in which he meets a stranger on the train, whom, upon hearing of Davis' work, gives him a two-hundred-dollar donation for Gravenhurst Camp.<sup>65</sup> Gravenhurst welcomed such YMCA financial support. On 6 May, Davis wrote that, while he was at Gravenhurst, the camp commandant ordered the extermination of two black bear cubs that the POWs were keeping as a part of their zoo and as camp mascots. As the bears were growing, they were considered a security risk.<sup>66</sup> Davis, on behalf of the prisoners, stepped in and managed to "save" one of the cubs, which was ultimately removed to the wild. On 3 July Davis noted that the greatest desire of the POWs was to have an athletics building constructed.<sup>67</sup> Davis also reported that he was instructed by the commandant to converse only in English, while interviewing the POWs outside the perimeter of the camp compound. We know that the athletic grounds were located outside the compound in early 1942, and all athletic trips, swimming among them, were supervised by camp guards. It comes as no surprise then, that

Davis was watched closely while he held his meetings. However, the presence of the interpreter implies that, although Davis was visiting the camp for the YMCA, thereby rendering a religious-intentioned social service, he was not entirely trusted by the camp commandants. The commandants can hardly be blamed for taking such precautions as their job was to keep prisoners in, and to know of any suspicious activities on the prisoners' part. This was not the only time Davis made note of and criticized such precautions. The camp commandant of Gravenhurst in 1942, however, had reason to be alert due to the attempts at escape that occurred during sport outings that summer. The last recording Davis made in his diary concerning Gravenhurst was on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October 1942,<sup>68</sup> in which he made special note of planning for two hockey goals to be constructed at the cost of \$3.00, a sum to be covered by the YMCA. Although Davis' diary as a source has its limitations, it adds some detail with how closely he worked in conjunction with the POWs needs.



*Figure 9 German POWs skating at Camp C (Courtesy Library and Archives of Canada)<sup>69</sup>*

## Espanola: Camp 21, Camp “F”



*Figure 10 Camp Espanola (Courtesy Kirk W. Goodlet)<sup>70</sup>*

Gravenhurst, or Camp “C” as it was sometimes called was not the only POW camp in Ontario that Jerome Davis, as YMCA representative of War Prisoner Aid, supplied with sporting goods. In fact, he did so for Espanola, Bowmanville and Neys POW Camps as well. The following, an account of Davis’ visits and work with respect to Espanola Camp, will, like my previous approach, examine the Daily Log, Davis’ personal hand-written notes, his official committee reports, and his personal diary accounts.

### **Daily Log, Camp Espanola, July 1940- April 1943**

To begin, it is important to note that the commandants of Espanola POW Camp were often more concerned with the recreation sport situation of the Canadian Veteran’s Guard<sup>71</sup>, as well, the nearby Espanola civilian community. In fact, the Daily Log reflects a more detailed

plethora of sport in the community and guard sport events than POW sport. However, the Daily Log for Espanola still sheds light on POW sport, supported by Jerome Davis and the YMCA.

On 20 July 1940 the recently-arrived commandant of Espanola POW Camp received orders from Canadian Internment Operations to implement recreation provisions for the recently arrived POWs, such as for football and the like.<sup>72</sup> The commandant wasted no time in obeying these orders. The very next day he conducted an “exhaustive study of the camp,” holding meetings with two of the POWs to discuss recreation.<sup>73</sup> By 23 July 1940 the commandant was trying to procure grass sod to create a recreation field.<sup>74</sup> This act by itself demonstrates that camp commandants were motivated to facilitate sport as much as possible, and, welcomed YMCA support in getting sport/recreation programs initiated.

On 29 July 1940 we learn of the first implemented POW sport activity, at Camp Espanola. “Prisoners of War were given their first swim, 50 only being escorted to the lake.”<sup>75</sup> According to the Daily Log on 31 July, “The daily swim was inaugurated as a ‘twice daily’ affair at 0900 hours and 1400 hours (Saturdays and Sundays excepted) 150 Prisoners of War were accommodated at each hour.”<sup>76</sup> The POWs at Camp Espanola, like those at Gravenhurst, were excited for the opportunities that being situated near a lake provided. The commandant was eager to facilitate this sporting event in particular, as evidenced on 3 August, when he reported to the Canadian Internment Operations headquarters, on his organization of what were then called swim parties, twice daily.<sup>77</sup> Reports on 6 and 8 August discuss the popularity of the “swim parade” as 150 POWs were regularly accommodated<sup>78</sup> on each outing. These swim parties occurred early in the history of Espanola Camp, the date of 14 August 1940 holds particular distinction in the sporting life of POWs interned at Espanola Camp. On that day “the formal opening of the Sports Grounds was made... by the Prisoners’ of War at which the commandant,

the Adjutant, and interpreters accompanied by the Swiss [Geneva Convention] Consul were present. Races and games were hotly contested.”<sup>79</sup> This was an important event in the history of Espanola Camp as the sports grounds were not located within the POW compound, but rather situated in a wired off section of terrain away from the main camp, as figure 7 below depicts.<sup>80</sup>

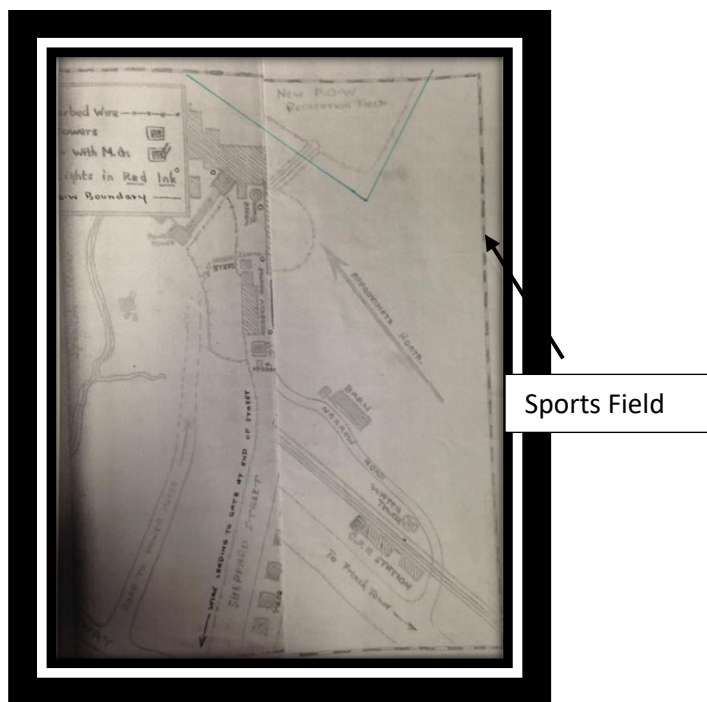


Figure 11 Camp Map Espanola (Courtesy Library and Archives of Canada)<sup>81</sup>

This fact becomes central in importance, as the recreation field at Espanola became a fertile place for plotting escape plans. Thirteen days after the grand opening of the recreation field, four POWs were discovered buried shallowly by their comrades in an obscure corner of the sports field. Intending a night escape; they were noticed as missing by the guards and apprehended without incident.<sup>82</sup> This would not be the last escape attempt from the sport field.

The new recreation grounds made possible the creation of a rink during the winter months. On 17 September 1940 the camp commandant telephoned a Mr. Babcock raising the issue of hockey equipment for the soldiers. The commandant noted; “arrangements made to get a quantity of sporting equipment from Toronto for the camp. This from Sportsman’s League.”<sup>83</sup>



Who Mr. Babcock was or what the Sportsman's League was is not discussed in the record, but the commandant's notation demonstrates that he had not yet received a visit from Jerome Davis or any YMCA representative. This shows that, on his own initiative he sought to supply the POW camp with the required sport supplies for the upcoming winter months.

In fact, Davis' first visit to Espanola Camp did not occur until almost six months later, on 1 March 1941. Davis testified having met with the POW camp leaders and inspected their recreation field and facilities.<sup>84</sup> Davis returned to the camp on 2 May 1941, staying until 9 May. He made a more in-depth inspection of the recreation facilities as well as sport supplies.<sup>85</sup> Davis was a serious surveyor of the daily Camp activities seeking to have a thorough understanding of what was both needed and desired by the incarcerated men.

Not long after Davis' departure on 17 May 1941, the recreation field once again became the sight of an attempted escape. Three POWs were found buried under a piece of cardboard in the long jump pit; the on-duty guard, remembering the sand was earlier disturbed and then appeared perfectly flat, sounded the alarm and the three POWs were apprehended. As well the guards found a sack of food hidden under a bench in the recreation yard.<sup>86</sup> As the recreation yard was regularly busy, it was easy for POWs to disguise activities aimed at attempting to hide fellow POWs.

Another significant sporting event occurred 2 June 1941, a day that "was observed as a P.O.W. Holiday by request. Whit-Monday when prisoners indulged in a day of sport festivities."<sup>87</sup> The reason for the requested holiday was due to the fact that working parties were held every day except Sundays. If the POWs wished to organize a whole day sport event, they needed to schedule it for a Sunday, or late Saturday afternoon, or request special permission for a holiday. Seeking permission to have a holiday demonstrates how important traditionally

religious, secularized holidays were to German POWs; it also demonstrates how athletically minded POWs were. A holiday usually was requested in order to stage a sportsfest.

Sports at Espanola Camp also included sport fishing. Such a description is included in a Daily Log notation of 28 June 1941: “Bass fishing opened today and many ...took advantage of the Saturday [afternoon] to indulge in some fishing.”<sup>88</sup> It is surmised that other camps organized fishing parties outside the camp compounds, adding yet another activity to the list of sport enjoyment treats German POWs had available to them in Canada. Another sport popular at most POW camps was table tennis (ping-pong), but even this sport could at times arouse suspicion. On 4 July 1941, as a member of the camp guard patrolled near the Red Cross Hospital (located outside the compound), he spotted a ping-pong ball. Upon inspection he found it held a tightly wrapped letter inside written, signed by a German POW. The POW signee was sentenced to disciplinary separation from the other POWs for 21 days.<sup>89</sup>

As noted, swimming parties offered chances for escape attempts, as seen in the case of Gravenhurst. But Espanola, by comparison, appeared to have fewer escape attempts. Swimming parties at Espanola allotted approximately one guard per fifty men. Such a staggering statistic might lead one to believe that more escape attempts would have occurred there, but such is not the case.<sup>90</sup> Davis made a return visit to Espanola on the 17 September 1941,<sup>91</sup> meeting with the camp leader. However, nothing of note was recorded. He returned on 12 November and the 30 December, each time visiting with the camp leader/spokesman, but again, nothing of direct significance to athletics was recorded. The same occurred on 12 March 1942.<sup>92</sup>

On 21 March 1942 dangers associated with gymnastics, as practiced at the majority of POW camps in the German tradition of Turnverein exercise, prompted the following notation: “at 2020 hours POW Alex Keller was seriously injured while exercising on the horizontal

bars...[he] was admitted to hospital and died @ [0500] hours, of a fractured skull.”<sup>93</sup> It is highly doubtful that such a drastic turn of events promoted suppression of popularity for gymnastic exercise, as indeed similar gymnastic outcomes occurred multiple times over decades in the history of YMCA gymnasiums nationwide. Gymnastics remained popular in POW camps. Though noted by camp commandants and Davis, however, to deny a form of popular culture exercise, even if tragedy ensued from time to time, appeared unreasonable. Davis concerns were recorded on 1 June 1942 in his official Report #14: “One thinks of the many athletic activities. For instance, home-made gymnasium rings swinging on inadequate straps so that sometimes accidents do occur.”<sup>94</sup>

On 18 May Davis visited Espanola Camp once again, this time bringing with him Tracy Strong, General Secretary of the World Committee,<sup>95</sup> and YMCA Director of POW Operations. Together they visited all authorized places within and around the periphery of the POW camp. Following this visit, swimming parties increased.<sup>96</sup> On 15 August 1942 two POW made their escape, and, as a response, all swimming parties were cancelled.<sup>97</sup> However, the escapees were recaptured by the RCMP on 21 August. Swimming was reinstated soon after. Unlike Camp Gravenhurst, no Camp Espanola report exists detailing POW agreements with the camp commandant on the issue of conduct outside the POW camp. Perhaps this is due to what appeared to be commandant disinterest in the camp in general,<sup>98</sup> or simply lessened concern due to lower escape numbers. Davis visited Espanola Camp a final time on 4 October 1942; the camp’s closed permanently in 1943. Davis’ final Espanola report cited nothing of relevancy to this study.<sup>99</sup>

A 30 November 1942 note another glimpse into sporting activities not yet mentioned. On that day Espanola Camp organized ski and bush ‘hiking’ parties conducted outside the

compound.<sup>100</sup> Such activities, never noted at any other camp, remained a popular event during the winter months for German POWs. No reports from Davis, ever mentioned providing skis. Therefore, it is concluded that the POWs who wished to cross-country ski needed to provide their own means, in all probability through their camp canteen, to procure skis from a civilian department/sporting goods store. The final Espanola Daily Log report concerning sport noted a POW injury occurrence. On 3 January 1943 a POW broke his leg at 1430 hours while skating and was admitted for treatment to the Red Cross hospital in the town of Espanola.<sup>101</sup> As anyone who has lived in a far northern climate can attest, such incidents were common. Such incidents seldom weighed heavily in the consideration of putting a stop to skating activity.

### **Davis' Personal Hand-Written Notes, Espanola, 1940- Spring 1943**

Davis' handwritten notes contain only limited bits of information pertaining to Espanola's requests for sporting goods. However, a confidential report buried in his handwritten file dated 24 July 1942 noted that a POW-YMCA Committee at Camp #21 Espanola had been formed. The Director of athletics of The Committee was a man by the last name of Koppers. A later report (25 November 1942) reported that the elected camp leader with whom Davis had much contact was a Mr. Hess.<sup>102</sup> This tells us two things: 1) the German prisoners formed their own makeshift YMCA with the help of the official YMCA, and 2) the German POWs took athletics seriously enough to appoint a sport representative to their committee. This would have undoubtedly helped to facilitate requests, as a Committee representative could either contact Davis directly or the YMCA at large.

## **Davis' Official Committee of War Prisoner Aid in Canada Reports, Espanola, 1940-Spring 1943**

Jerome Davis' official reports contain eight comprehensive entries on Espanola and its sporting situation. The first of these reports was 4 February 1941, in which Davis stated: "We plan to have in each camp the following committees... Athletics... [a] chairman of each of these committees, [along] with the camp leader, would make up the Y.M.C.A. Committee in the camp."<sup>103</sup> While this seems to be a blanket statement, Davis specifically mentions it while discussing Espanola and its burgeoning organizational structure with regard to money, canteen, and sport requisitions. The POWs of Espanola pooled their wages to a central collection fund, from which each POW could select goods from the canteen totalling in price an equal amount of expenditure as all others. It was from this central fund that all sporting goods were purchased. Espanola was an officer's camp and as such the monetary collection was quite substantial; officers were quite adept at requisitioning the sporting goods they needed without assistance from the YMCAs. This did not, however, signify that YMCA requests did not occur, but did indeed increase with the disappearance of officers pay received from Germany later in the war. In fact, Davis made note of this in his Report from 3 March 1941, in which he explained "there are fewer requests at this camp than any camp I have been to, thus indicating that conditions were reasonably good, since the men have money of their own which has been used to buy the things they need."<sup>104</sup> The officers at Espanola, so long as they received their wages from Germany, required less YMCA support than camps that held enlisted men. Espanola officers also employed a system in which they contacted distributors, by mail who in turn sent them goods required.

Davis' report of 2 January 1942 paints a vivid picture of the sporting life of Espanola POWs. According to Davis: "they have two large skating rinks (one for hockey matches) where

hundreds can skate at once. They are being used constantly. In addition, a certain number of the men are allowed to go on group walks everyday outside the compound of two hours duration. In the Field of athletics they have divided the men according to the districts in which they lived in Germany. The men from each district are allowed their time together in the various athletic activities from the gymnasium all the way to the skating rink.”<sup>105</sup> Davis’ presumption of hundreds of men being on the ice at once may seem an exaggeration, but he reaffirmed such an assertion later, in June of 1943.

In June 1942 Davis brought a YMCA “big-wig” with him to Espanola, Mr. Tracy Strong, General Secretary of the World Alliance of YMCAs. Following his visit Strong promised to “send in a gymnasium bicycle for the invalids at camp No. 21,”<sup>106</sup> Espanola Camp served in part, as a holding ground for sick and ailing POWs. However, that fact in no way reflected a decrease in athletics. In December of 1942 Davis’ visit to Espanola was accompanied by his assistant, Dr. Benjamin P. Spiro (in charge of all YMCA purchasing for the camps). Following his visit, Spiro wrote on the athletics he witnessed, affixing his remarks to Davis’ official report. He related that “the P/W’s are very busy in other fields; education, music, sports and theatricals. They have now fifteen ice-hockey teams each playing at least twice a week. As each team is formed by men coming from specific parts of Germany, there is a very keen competition between the teams comparable to a national league game.”<sup>107</sup> Spiro’s report provided alternative corroboration to Davis’ accounts. As purchaser of the sporting goods received at Espanola, Spiro was in a unique position to analyse the effective use that POWs were making of sport articles that the YMCA War Prisoner Aid purchased for them.

In July of 1943 Davis wrote his last official report as Director of YMCA War Prisoner Aid Canada. He summed up Espanola’s sport activities by the following. “In the field of athletics

they have a boxing ring and two skating rinks; a field track one hundred meters by sixty; with equipment including soccer balls; fist balls;<sup>108</sup> discus; three shotput; parallel bars; horizontal bar; vaulting horse; mats; punching bags; and they have about five hundred pairs of skates during the winter season. They have six ping-pong tables...were in use virtually all the time in winter.”<sup>109</sup> It appears that Davis wanted to pass down to his successor a semblance of what each camp possessed in the way of sporting goods. However, a complete inventory would have been impossible unless conducted by every camp as a one-time event, something Davis did not deem necessary.

### **Davis' Personal Diary, Espanola, 1942**

Perhaps Davis' handwritten attention to detail considering Espanola Camp is reason enough for him to have made only one mention of the camp in his diary. His only mention of the camp occurred on 24 July 1942, where he opined that the men being allowed out of the compound to swim at the lake was indeed a good thing.<sup>110</sup>

## Bowmanville: Camp 30



Figure 12 Sketch of Camp 30 (Courtesy Clarington Development Dtah)<sup>111</sup>

Gravenhurst and Espanola were not the only POW camps in Ontario that Jerome Davis, as YMCA Director of War Prisoner Aid, was called upon in accruing sporting goods. In fact, he did so for Camp Bowmanville and Camp Neys also. An accounting of Davis' visits and energies for Bowmanville follows.

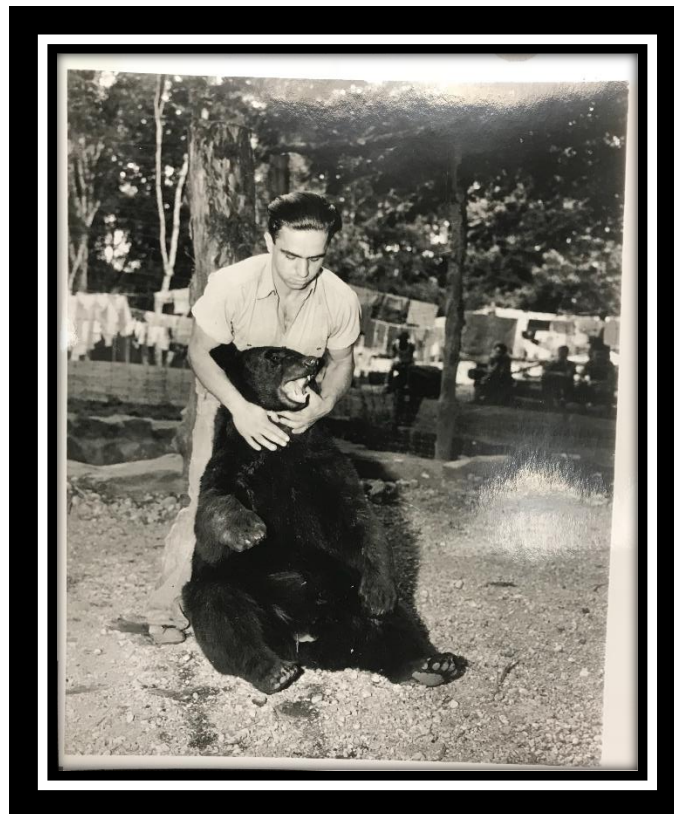
### Daily Log, Camp Bowmanville, November 1941- April 1943

The Bowmanville Camp Daily Log pertaining to athletic activity among the German POWs is glaringly short. In fact, of the data entries pertaining to Davis' visits are a record of whom he visited. Rare are entries relative to sports.<sup>112</sup> However, the Daily Log itself did report



the sporting endeavours of the German POWs. A report from 4 June 1942 recorded “All guests [German POWs] are quiet and busy on gardening and sports- we hope that is all.”<sup>113</sup>

Bowmanville Camp appeared to be a more relaxed facility than many others. As the report from 8 June 1942 reported: “weather is lovely and the guests are proceeding with the construction of the tennis court as well as the enclosure for their miniature zoo.”<sup>114</sup> The construction of a tennis court demonstrates that success had been achieved in the way of gaining materials needed to build a court, as well as equipment to play the same. The construction of a zoo is supported by pictorial evidence, a black bear cub mascot (depicted in figure 6). The POWs at Bowmanville seemed to have the same mascot propensities as the POWs at Gravenhurst Camp. As well, the camp report of 4 October 1942 noted the arrival of pigs and ducks as new zoo occupants.<sup>115</sup>



116

*Figure 13 POW with mascot (Courtesy of University of Toronto Archives)*

Also on 4 October 1942 the POWs completed their final competitive sports day.<sup>117</sup> Precisely who competed and against whom is not noted. On 16 December 1942 one learns how much “into” winter sports German POWs were. The commandant reported: “P.O.W. have adopted decidedly Canadian game of Ice Hockey, and are building an outdoor rink for this purpose.”<sup>118</sup> In Davis’ diary he recorded the issue to each camp a YMCA-produced film detailing the game of hockey, its rules, regulations, and supplies needed. There is little doubt that German POWs found ice hockey to be a winter replacement for summer football.<sup>119</sup>

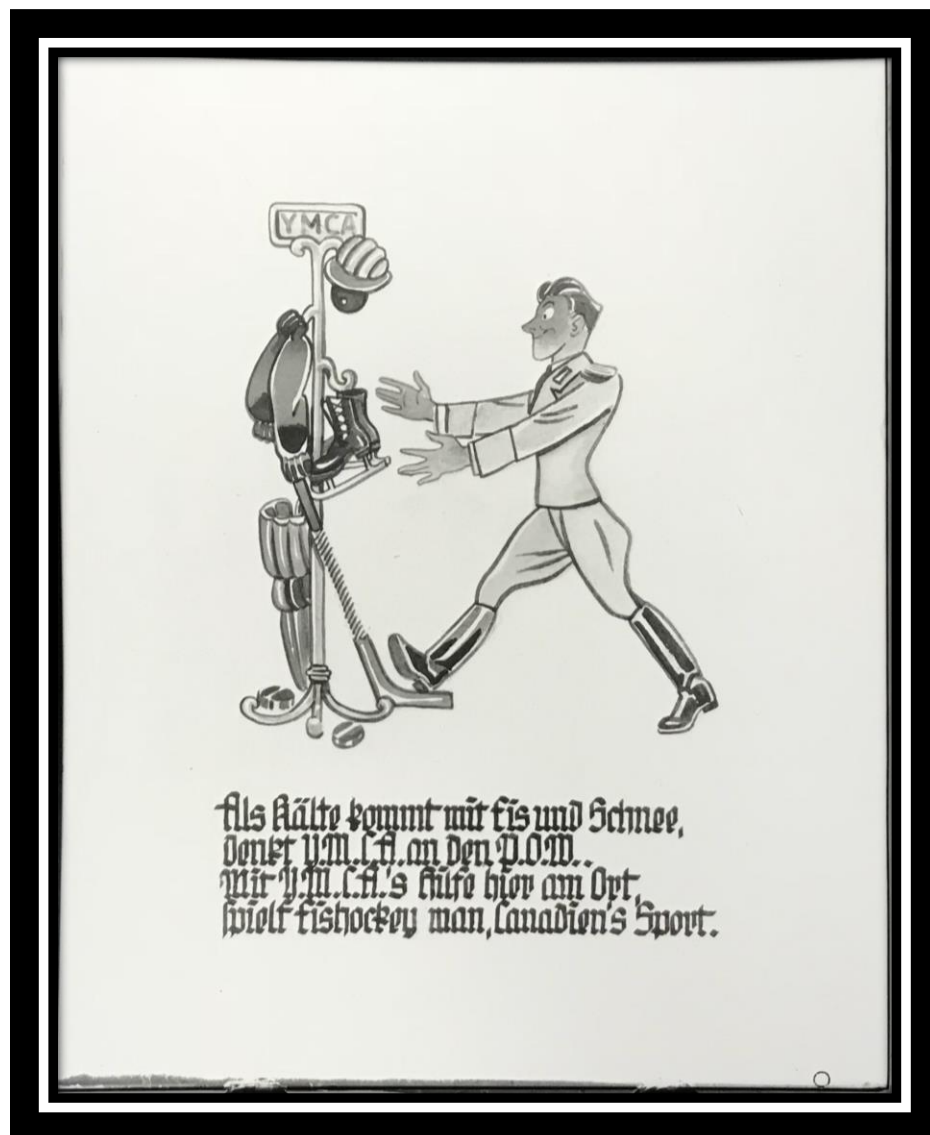


Figure 14 POW drawing of YMCA provisions and poem (in endnote) (Courtesy University of Toronto Archives)<sup>120</sup>

On 2 February 1943 we learn that the POWS at Bowmanville, similar to those at Espanola, enjoyed a ski party.<sup>121</sup> The affair took place outside the enclosure, the POWs on parole. A walking party of 61 men comprised the group.<sup>122</sup> Like winter sport in general the activities declined with warmer weather occurring, prompting a POW return to summer activities.

### **Davis' Personal Hand-Written Notes, Bowmanville, 1941- Spring 1943**

Davis' handwritten notes requesting sporting goods for Camp Bowmanville were shorter than most with regard to other camps, and set in a different tone. This may have to do with the fact that the Bowmanville facility was largely a former training school for boys which already had a gymnasium as well as sports fields. Therefore, the camp did not require supplies needed to build sporting grounds or recreation huts. As well, many sporting goods usually accompanying athletics facilities were already present.

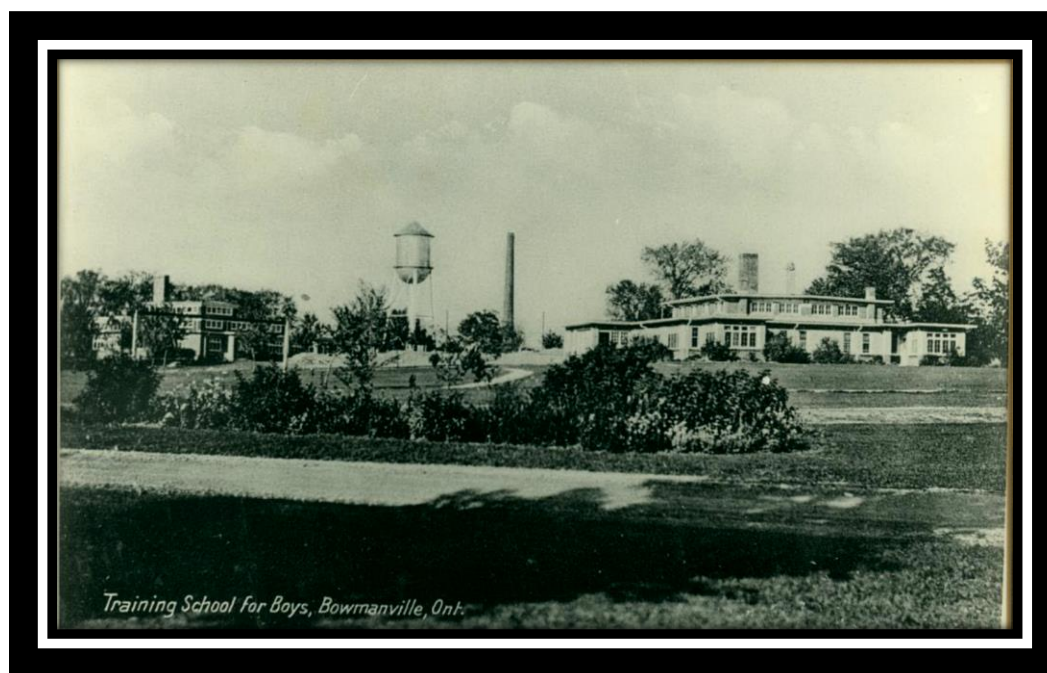
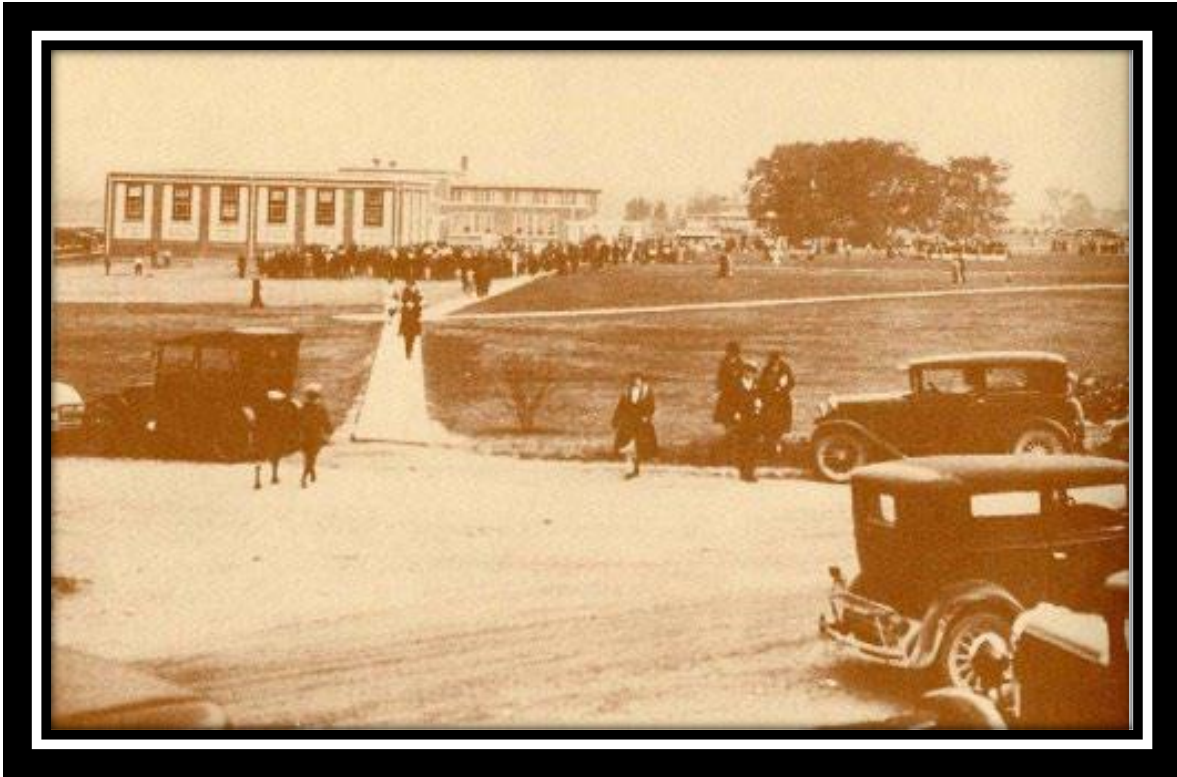


Figure 15 Training School for Boys Bowmanville Ontario, Mess Hall (Courtesy Clarington Development)<sup>123</sup>



*Figure 16 Training School for Boys Bowmanville Ontario, Main Campus (Courtesy Clarington Development)<sup>124</sup>*

Camp Bowmanville similar to Espanola, was an officers camp, meaning sporting goods were more easily attained via purchase from an officers pay (through the camp canteen) from Germany. Receiving a substantially higher pay than enlisted POWs, these men were known to send for sporting goods on their own initiative rather than through YMCA channels. In fact, with regard to Bowmanville Davis noted only seven written requests for YMCA-provided sporting goods.

The first Bowmanville request Davis received was on 4 November 1941,<sup>125</sup> in which POW officers requested:

- 1 goal keep
- 24 skates hockey
- 20 pair pants
- 20 pair stockings
- 20 pair shin guards
- 20 pair gloves

- 20 pair shoulder pads
- 20 jerseys (10 one color 10 another)
- tape
- goal keepers skates
- 1 shoulder protector
- 1 body protector
- 2 shin guard protector
- 3 shoe protector
- 4 gloves
- 2 string nets hockey

As seen above Bowmanville POWs were “into” hockey. And their requests for hockey equipment, in fact other athletic articles requests did not end there. Later in November 1941 the officers requested the following:

- 2 ice hockey goals
- 12 skipping ropes
- 1 punching bag
- 6 pairs of leather protectors for punching bag
- 2 footballs
- 2 handballs
- They had 5 footballs and handballs to start with when they arrived

On 2 January 1942 Davis’ notes contained a checklist in which he sought to ensure that Bowmanville received its hockey goals.<sup>126</sup> His handwritten notes of 26 February through 5 September 1942 identified the POW-YMCA Committee camp leader, “President” Reinberger, along with his chaired committees of which sports was one.<sup>127</sup> On 2 October 1942 Davis jotted a quick note reinforcing the need for boxing materials.<sup>128</sup> On 17 November 1942 we learn that not only did Bowmanville have a POW-YMCA sport committee, but also a tennis committee under the leadership of Major Merten.<sup>129</sup> As tennis holds a long history of once being an elitist game of the upper classes, so it was in the case of interned World War II German military officers hence,

a committee purely dedicated to the preservation of the sport and its needed supplies at Camp Bowmanville.

The last of Davis' handwritten notes pertaining to Bowmanville requests was from 20 February 1943.<sup>130</sup> Davis stipulated that POW officers were to pay for all of the following goods themselves:

- 20 fencing foils
- 10 dozen badminton birds
- 40 field hockey sticks
- 12 field hockey balls
- 15 mouth protectors boxing
- 25 soccer balls
- 12 dozen tennis balls (they are ready to return 40 old balls for reclaim if possible)

One need not question why Davis stipulated this based upon the number of each of the goods Bowmanville POWs requested. Had they asked for less, or less expensive goods (Fencing Foils were not cheap sporting goods), or goods only when available, or when sporting supplies were no longer repairable, they may have found Davis to be less adamant concerning their paying for the goods. There is no follow-up as to whether the goods ever arrived but it is not impossible to believe that Davis did his upmost to facilitate all requests from Camp Bowmanville as he did all other camps.

### **Davis' Official Committee of War Prisoner Aid in Canada Reports, Bowmanville, 1940-Spring 1943**

As previously mentioned, Camp Bowmanville was on the site of a former boy's school. Davis makes specific and consistent note of this throughout the four official reports which he submitted relative to Bowmanville. In the official report for the months of November and December 1942 Davis mentioned the following facilitations: (1), "all the German officers have been placed in an excellent camp, a former school for boys, where they have a good gymnasium

and a fine swimming pool;” (2), “In athletics, footballs, ping-pong and Hockey equipment are secured;” (3), “besides a good gymnasium, a fine swimming pool, and an excellent skating rink.”<sup>131</sup> Such facilities prompted Davis to be less inclined to hear many complaints. There were camps across Canada operating in much worse conditions (as will be revealed in Chapter Four), and in greater need for goods and services from the YMCA. This is not to say that Davis did not attempt to supply Bowmanville with sport equipment. Quite the contrary, on 1 October 1942 his official Report #16 reported, “the men have five tennis courts which are constantly in use. It is difficult to keep an adequate supply of tennis balls, but the Y.M.C.A. has been able to do it. While in this camp I challenged General Friemel, the camp leader, to a competition match in tennis. As he was not amongst the best players in the camp, I was able to defeat him 6-4: 6-0.”<sup>132</sup> This demonstrates the fact that Davis himself was in part a sportsman rather than purely an administrator of War Prisoner Aid. As an adequate athlete, Davis had no qualms in participating with the German POWs. As such, it also demonstrates his trust of the German POWs and his constant urging to love one another and to treat the German POWs as you would treat anyone else. His act of playing tennis with the camp leader demonstrates how valuable sport and the provision of sporting goods was for Davis, and how friendships could exist across the wire.

Davis’ Report #17 for the months of October and November 1943 reported that Camp Bowmanville had all the supplies they needed for athletics.<sup>133</sup> Such good fortune continued. Davis fielded increasing requests in early 1943, reporting for the months of April through June of 1943 that Bowmanville, “In the field of athletics, [has] a recreation field ninety-five by fifty-five meters; a gymnasium approximately twelve by twenty-four meters; a boxing ring, five tennis courts, a skating rink and a swimming pool. In the gymnasium they have parallel and horizontal bars; vaulting horses; mats, gymnasium pulley weights; weight lifting bar; medicine balls and so

forth. All the camps are of course equipped with table tennis. In this camp they also have boxing equipment.”<sup>134</sup> Davis did indeed keep busy supplying the men of Bowmanville with sporting needs. He was persistent enough to leave a written record of his “supply activities” for his successor.

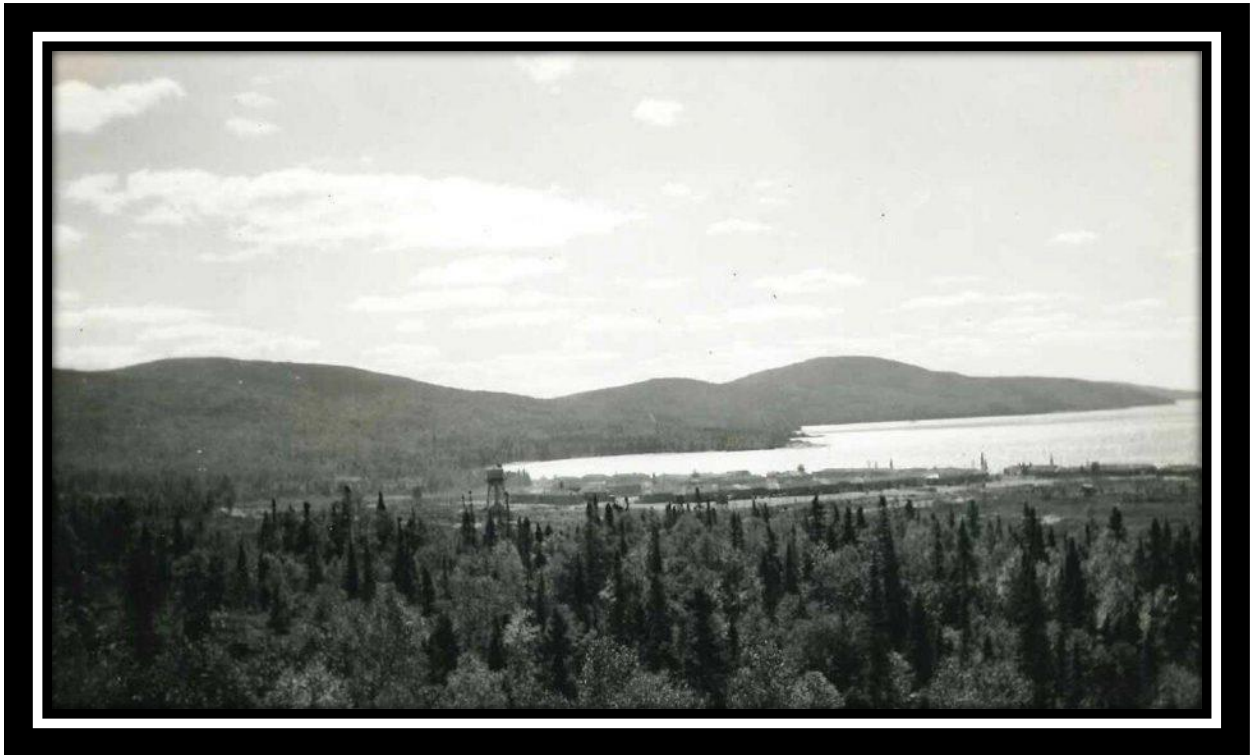
### **Davis’ Personal Diary, Bowmanville, 1942**

Davis’ personal diary from the year 1942 holds three specific references to Bowmanville Camp. On the very first entry, made on New Year’s Day, Davis noted that he held a day-long group discussion that included every committee member at Bowmanville Camp (of which the sports committee member would have been present). While Davis made no reference to sporting requests, he did record that he was presented with a long list of goods.<sup>135</sup> Davis’ second diary mention of Camp Bowmanville featured a lengthy entry concerning two POWs who had escaped that very day and that the commandant thought they may have simply walked out the front gate. Davis noted that he highly doubted such a circumstance prevailed.<sup>136</sup> Davis went on to report that the Canadian Veterans Guards at Bowmanville believed the German POWs were “Molly Coddled,” a feeling they had no compunction in relating it to Davis.<sup>137</sup> When the two escapees were apprehended and Davis spoke to the commandant regarding their punishment (23 days isolation, which Davis thought harsh) the commandant told him that he simply could not be lenient in matters of escape as this might promulgate leniency on other matters of discipline in the camp.<sup>138</sup> Davis’ last diary entry pertaining to Bowmanville Camp deals with winter sport, as well as a personal frustration. On 11 December 1942, Davis noted that he submitted an order for another shipment of skates for POW use. At the same time he vented his personal frustration at the commandant’s refusal for him to see and speak to any of the POWs. Davis did not mention as

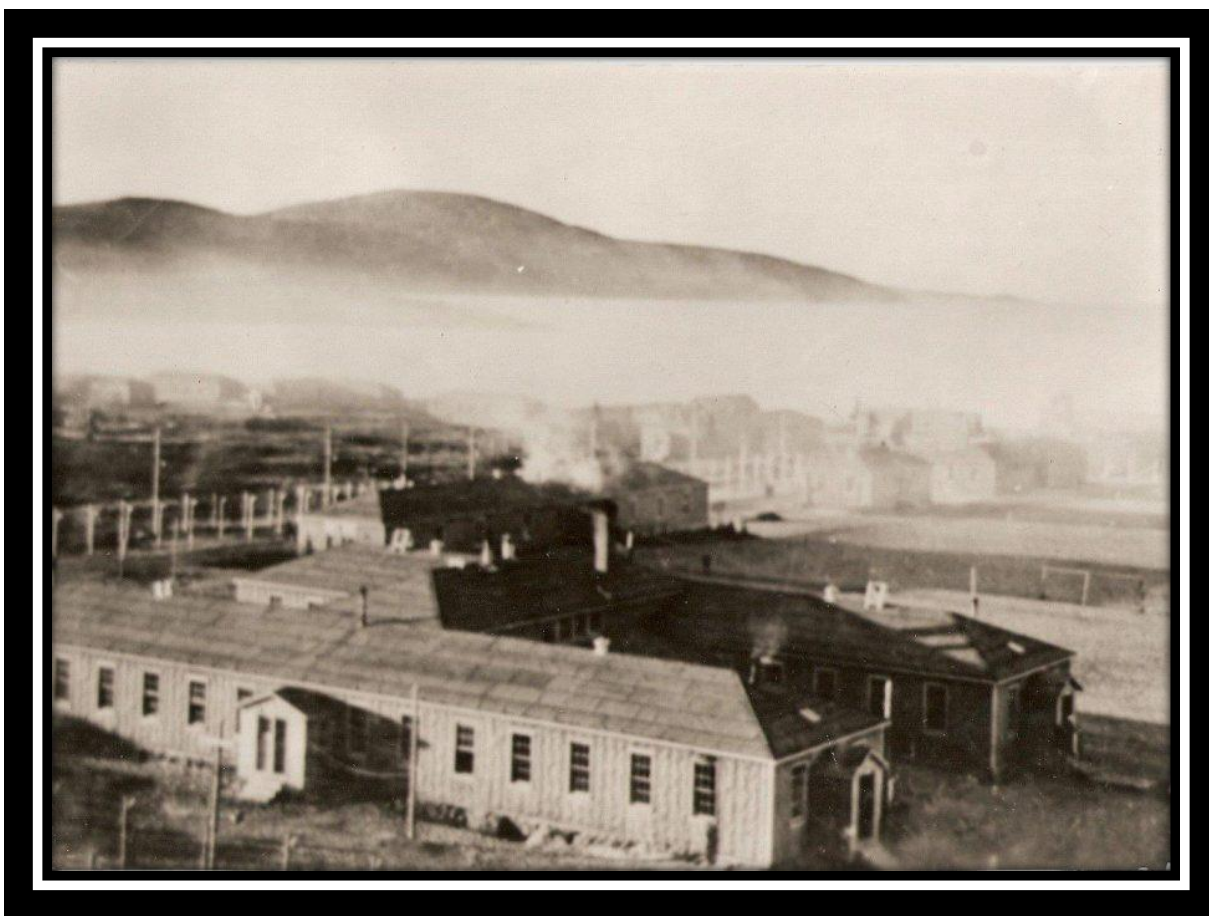


to why he was refused access to the men, which leads to the belief that although he was frustrated, he might have accepted the commandants reasoning as legitimate.<sup>139</sup>

### **Neys: Camp 100, Camp “W”**



*Figure 17 Overview of Neys Camp 100 (Courtesy Ontario Parks)<sup>140</sup>*



*Figure 18 Mess Hall Circa 1940 (Courtesy Ontario Parks)<sup>141</sup>*

### **Daily Log, Camp Neys, January 1941- April 1943**

The Daily Log for Neys is fortunately more detailed when it comes to the sport activities of the German POWs. As well, Davis' visits to Camp Neys are more clearly described. On 7 July 1941, after three visits from Davis over the course of the winter and early spring, the POWs were extended beach privileges outside the camp compound.<sup>142</sup> By 1 August 1941 the beach party was extended to one and a half hours and were held both mornings and afternoons.

Davis returned to Camp Neys on 26 March 1942<sup>143</sup> as well as on 2 May.<sup>144</sup> On both occasions Davis held daylong conferences with the camp leader. As well he interviewed other POWs. What they discussed was not reported. By the spring and summer of 1942 (June through

August) the German POWs resumed swimming and beach parties on a parole system.<sup>145</sup> Davis returned for his ninth visit to Camp Neys on 29 August 1942, where he interviewed some of the German POWs reporting that “prisoners had no complaints.”<sup>146</sup> Again following Davis’ visit, the Camp Daily Log reported swimming party participation that appeared to go from Neys to the beach daily. On Davis’ tenth visit to Neys he was accompanied by Dr. Benjamin Spiro of New York, Assistant Director of YMCA War Prisoner Aid Canada, and Fritz Soderberg of the Worlds Alliance of Churches.<sup>147</sup> We learn from the Daily Log that it was these two men who periodically continued to visit Camp Neys, taking care of sporting-related requests after Davis resigned his position and before Hermann Boeschenstein stepped into the directorship role.

### **Davis’ Personal Hand-Written Notes, Neys, 1941- Spring 1943**

Davis’ handwritten notes pertaining to Camp Neys both quite lengthy and detailed. The first request Davis recorded at Neys was on 1 May 1941,<sup>148</sup> in which the POWs requested:

- 2 foils and two fencing masks
- 1 ping-pong table (desperate need)
- 1 volleyball
- 1 medicine ball- 15 lbs

The year of 1941 ended with another request issued to Davis on 2 December, 1941.<sup>149</sup> The requests were:

- 1 horizontal bar
- 1 wrestling mat
- 1 boxing ring
- 5 sets of boxing gloves
- 2 soccer balls
- 1 pump and repair kit
- 4 baseballs
- 1 ping-pong board

- 10 ping-pong balls
- 5 ping-pong nets
- 4 pairs boxing gloves- 8oz

While these lists do not appear long, the cost of such goods must be taken into account. Davis never mentions prices in his own notes, but in his official reports he often had to lay out the specific costs of what the POWs requested. When Davis lists pricing in his handwritten notes he is often referring to the cost of sending in “raw-goods” which the POWs would use to make their own sporting equipment. Otherwise, costs would be higher. An example: Davis’ statement that the POWs at Neys would construct their own water polo goals if the YMCA supplied the iron at the cost of \$18.50.<sup>150</sup>

On 31 March 1942, Davis, well known to the POWs, and they well known to him, wrote to POW Lenz as to whether the screws the YMCA had sent for the construction of a boxing ring were adequate.<sup>151</sup> The reason Davis knew Lenz was for a very specific reason. In Davis’ notes from 28 May 1942, POW Lenz was listed as the Camp YMCA Athletics Committee representative. In fact the POWs at Neys organized an entire YMCA Committee Board of representatives governing 8 different camp activities, athletics being only one example.<sup>152</sup> On 30 July<sup>153</sup> Davis appended to his notes a list given to him by Lenz through the camp leader, which detailed the following requests:

- 1 sand filled punching bag
- 1 small bag usually filled with corn (speed bag)
- 1 water ball
- White athletic shorts for ten men
- 8 racquets and presses
- 2 Ice Hockey goal posts (POWs will make netting)
- 1 roll tape
- 50x ice hockey skates in sizes 8-11
- 2 complete protection equipment for goalies
- 20 shin protectors
- 50 socks
- 10 pucks

It is impressive that by the month of July 1942 the POWs were organized so well that they made sure to submit requests to Davis well in advance of the normal time required for shipment/arrival. On 29 August 1942<sup>154</sup> the POWs, through Lenz, presented a list of requests to Davis shortly after he arrived and met with the camp leader. This list was particularly extensive:

- For Camp 100- 638 men
- 30 dozen ping-pong balls
- Some balls and athletic equipment
- 2 sets of #10 boxing gloves
- 2 sets of #8 boxing gloves
- Rivets for skating shoes
- 5 new pairs of skates to replace returned broken ones (they have 30 pairs)
- 2 goalie knee protectors
- 2 large sticks keeper
- Any possible free protective gear
- Stop watch with 1/5 of a seconds timer
- 2 badminton racquets with presses
- String for badminton net
- One book of badminton rules
- 6 or a dozen feathered shuttlecocks
- 3 soccer balls #5
- 5 ½ feet of bar @ 1 1/16 inch in diameter for weights, they have weights need bars only
- 1 medicine ball 6 lbs
- Leather straps to throw ball (2 yards 1" -1 ¼"wide and 1/8" thick )

Requests of goodly size from Camp Neys was nothing new for Davis. His handwritten notes bearing on a sporting goods request for the four-month period November 1942 to February 1943 entailed the following:

- 3 footballs
- 1 medicine ball
- 23 volleyballs
- 6'x6' matting
- 50 yards skipping rope
- batting and canvas for horses and spring boards
- 1 set head protection

- 4 tennis racquets
- tennis balls
- line paint
- horizontal bar
- bars
- spring hooks
- pommel/vaulting horse
- ash wood parallel bars<sup>155</sup>

The list continued encompassing educational supplies and a plethora of goods for all manner of projects. Also included was a list (undated) of sporting goods that Davis was asked to obtain:

- 2 sets of size 8 football shoes
- 1 set of size 10 football shoes
- canvas for vaulting horse 6'x6'
- 2 inch handles for horse
- canvas mat 2yds x3yds
- 2 rubber closures for top and bottom punching bag
- rules and regulations for rugby
- 6 swivels for punching bags and springhooks
- 12 pieces hickory or ash wood 4 feet long (for baseball bats)
- discus 4 1/2lbs
- shot put 11-12lbs
- 4 dozen ping-pong balls
- 30 pairs sneakers (they will pay \$1.25 of cost) sizes 8, 8 ½, 9
- They have four football grounds and 4 boxing rings<sup>156</sup>

While the cost of individual articles requested was not substantial, mention must be made of the fact that each and every purchase, when factored collectively, totalled a considerable amount. If Davis and his fellow European and American YMCA counterparts<sup>157</sup> did not spend considerable time raising funds for what soon became enormous requests, they very rapidly would have become unable to supply goods to any POWs. The larger the camp, the greater the requests; this will be clearly the case when the larger POW camps in Alberta are examined.

As can be established, the POWs at Neys made good use of their YMCA donated supplies.

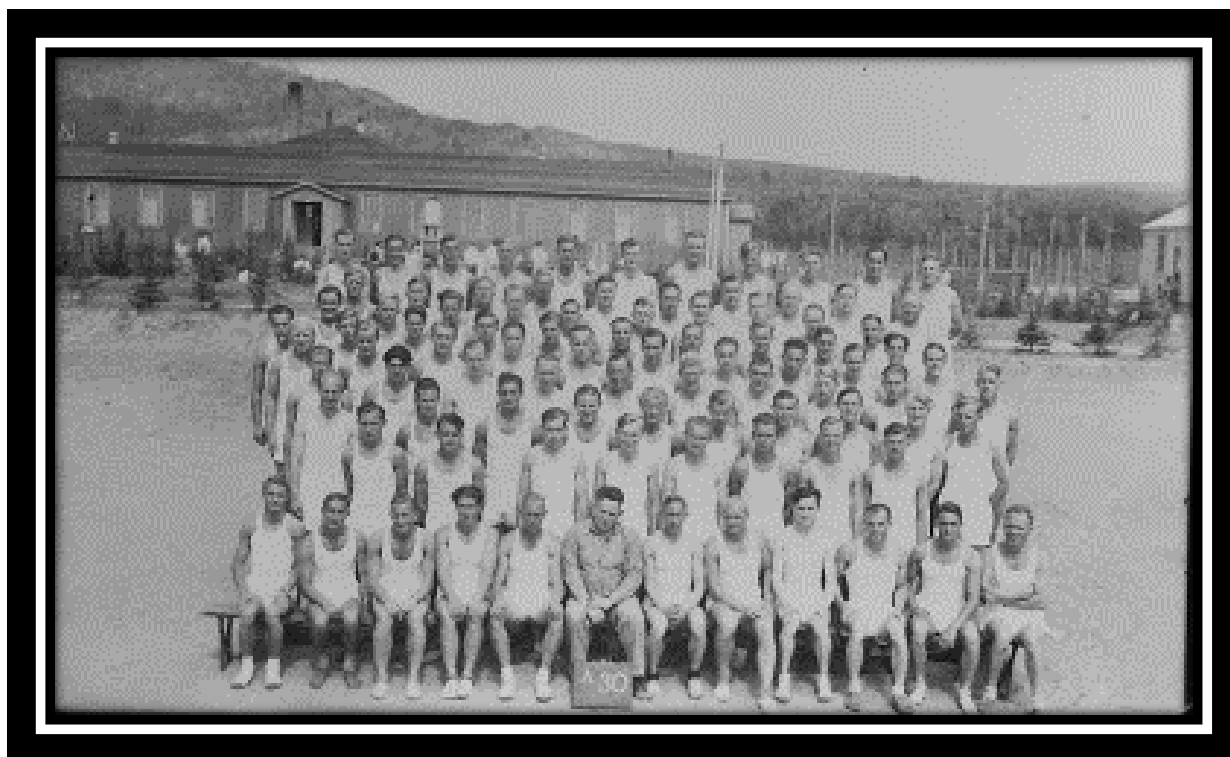


Figure 19 NMP 3934 Most of the P.O.W.s at the Neys Camp (Courtesy Nipigon Museum)<sup>158</sup>



Figure 20 NMP 3927 P.O.W. Neys Camp Athletic Group 1942 (Courtesy Nipigon Museum)<sup>159</sup>



Figure 21 NMP 3937 P.O.W. Camp Neys. Ontario Athletic Group (Courtesy Nipigon Museum)<sup>160</sup>



Figure 22 Neys Camp Volleyball Team 1943 (Courtesy Nipigon Museum)<sup>161</sup>





Figure 23 NMP 3932 The Leader of P.O.W. Camp at Neys, Ontario with bear mascot (Courtesy Nipigon Museum)<sup>162</sup>

### **Davis' Official Committee of War Prisoner Aid in Canada Reports, Neys, 1940-Spring 1943**

Davis' official reports to his superiors were highly detailed. However, with direct references to Neys POW Camp only four entries are of interest to this study. In an appendix attached to his official Report #16 entitled, "German Camp School Camp 100,"<sup>163</sup> is a directory of all the classes taught at Camp Neys from June 1940 to June 1942.<sup>164</sup> As part of the Camp Neys overall education program the directory commented that the "Teaching of Gymnastics started." Statistics presented detailed that for 24 weeks, gymnastics classes were held for 8 hours a week. Each class lasted 75 minutes, 11 students attended. The report continued to explain September's class schedule in which gymnastics were held twice a week on Wednesdays and Thursdays at 1300 hours and 1430, hours respectively. Then too, what Camp Neys called the

German High School Education Plan, classes of gymnastics and ball games were to be taught by Dr. M. Keil. The fact that Camp Neys included gymnastics in its school curriculum demonstrated how prominently gymnastics were embedded in German educational culture. To have a class devoted in particular to gymnastics was quite a normal practice in Germany.

Davis' official Report #18 from October to November 1942 included Dr. Spiro's attached appendix which reported the following: "we visited the recreation hut again [after meal] which had been transformed since the moving picture show- into a gymnasium. Here we have supplied parallel bars, horizontal bar, rings and a vaulting horse."<sup>165</sup> Once again, it was Spiro who focused on the athletics of the POWs at Neys rather than Davis. In his appendix, Spiro provided a clue for Davis' secondary role. Referring to Davis, Spiro stated "the time of the Director during this two month period has been partially taken up with the larger problem of serving German prisoners of war in USSR and reciprocally the USSR prisoners in Germany. Whether arrangements can be made for the YMCA to serve these hundreds of thousands of men remains to be seen, but the need for the work cannot be overemphasized."<sup>166</sup> In validation of Davis' work for several months, Spiro noted that the men of Neys had "an athletic field ninety by fifty meters; a gymnasium and recreation hut; a tennis court and a skating rink. In the gymnasium they have parallel and horizontal bars; vaulting horses and mats."<sup>167</sup>

### **Davis' Personal Diary, Neys, 1942**

The significant amount of data that Davis presented in his handwritten notes and official reports on POW Camp Neys prompts reason to rationalize why there is not a single mention of Camp Neys in his personal diary. Davis obviously cared a great deal for prisoner welfare at Neys

as can be witnessed in the evidence examined heretofore. Therefore it would be erroneous to believe otherwise simply due to a lack of personal diary comment.

## **Conclusion**

Chapter Three has presented YMCA sporting provisions and sponsoring of programs in Ontario-located POW camps from 1940 through 1943. Out of the eleven camps that were in operation at any given time throughout the period 1940-1946, there were only four that were entirely POW-populated camps. The introductory chart in this chapter depicted camps which were in operation for 1940 through 1943, as well as the amount of visits Davis made to each camp in each year. The camps of Gravenhurst, Espanola, Bowmanville, and Neys were therefore chosen to be investigated through the lens of Davis' mission and the YMCA War Prisoners Aid provision of sporting goods. Though it is acknowledged that smaller secondary satellite work camps existed, I have placed them outside the parameters of this study. It is obvious from Davis' records that such camps never captured his interest, energies, or a substantial amount of his allocation efforts.

Provision of a plethora of sporting equipment and help in athletic facility establishment, as detailed in this chapter, proves that Davis: (1) believed in the goal of helping the least of God's people: German POWs; (2) pursued the processes and actions of bringing about sporting provision for the German POWs; (3) saw that sport was not only a character-building exercise but a critically necessary part of German POW life; (4) remained continually dedicated to his mission to facilitate the constant sport goods requests, report on the fulfillment of sports needs never quite satisfied, and to present to his superiors the thanks and appreciation received from the POW constituency; and finally (5) always took comfort in the development of a

theological/Christian principal evaluation of his work.<sup>168</sup> As Davis stated in his Report #19: “ In closing this last report, I want to state the pleasure it has been to be able to bring some light to the life of the men behind the barbed wire.”<sup>169</sup> Davis’ humble mission was to provide comforts for the German POW stationed in Canada, and humbly left his position knowing he had done what he had set out to accomplish.

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup>Jerome Davis, “In Canadian Prison Camps,” *The Christian Century Journal* (19 August 1942): 1002-1004.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Fry, “Former German P.O.W. camp on Muskoka Lake at Gravenhurst, this property has been purchased by a Toronto syndicate and will be converted into a quarter-of-a-million-dollar summer resort to be called the “Gateway hotel” *Toronto Star* Photograph Archive - Public Domain, From the *Toronto Star* Archives, G2--Canada-Ontario-Gravenhurst-125b-GO-202.

<sup>3</sup> Internment/POW camp daily logs from the Canadian National Archives are listed as Secret War Diary of... for the sake of clarity they will forthwith be entitled Camp Daily Logs. They were called Secret War Camp Diaries due to the classified nature of the documents during the war as well as the fact no duplicates could be made or in fact exist. Further endnotes in reference to daily logs will be as follows:

Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No## Internment Camp, (name) War Diary, dates: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp (name) ###, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. Dates. Event, Date.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2

<sup>5</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 20 Internment Camp, Gravenhurst, Ont War Diary, June 1940-June 1946: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp ‘C’ #20, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1940 TO 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1940. Commandant report on Davis visit to Gravenhurst 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1940.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> January 1941 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 1941, Commandant report Maag visit 10 January 1941.

<sup>7</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 20 Internment Camp, Gravenhurst, Ont War Diary, June 1940-June 1946: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp ‘C’ #20, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> February TO 31<sup>st</sup> February, 1941. Commandant report on Davis visit to Gravenhurst 8<sup>th</sup> February, 1941.

<sup>8</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 20 Internment Camp, Gravenhurst, Ont War Diary, June 1940-June 1946: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp ‘C’ #20, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> February TO 31<sup>st</sup> February, 1941. Commandant report on skating rink 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1941.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Commandant report on skating rink 20<sup>th</sup> February 1941.

<sup>10</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 20 Internment Camp, Gravenhurst, Ont War Diary, June 1940-June 1946: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp ‘C’ #20, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1 May TO 31 May, 1941. Davis report on Gravenhurst sports for 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1941.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Gravenhurst baseball report, 24 May 1941.

<sup>12</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 20 Internment Camp, Gravenhurst, Ont War Diary, June 1940-June 1946: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp ‘C’ #20, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> June TO 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1941. Commandant report on sporting goods 12<sup>th</sup> June, 1941.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., report on baseball game 19 June 1941.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Commandant report on football 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1941.

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<sup>15</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 20 Internment Camp, Gravenhurst, Ont War Diary, June 1940-June 1946: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'C' #20, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> August TO 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1941. Commandant report 20 August, 1941.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 25 August, 1941

<sup>17</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 20 Internment Camp, Gravenhurst, Ont War Diary, June 1940-June 1946: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'C' #20, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> October TO 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1941. Commandant report 21 October, 1941.

<sup>18</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 20 Internment Camp, Gravenhurst, Ont War Diary, June 1940-June 1946: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'C' #20, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> January TO 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1942. Commandant report 8 & 9 January, 1942.

<sup>19</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 20 Internment Camp, Gravenhurst, Ont War Diary, June 1940-June 1946: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'C' #20, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> January TO 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1942. Commandant report 8 & 9 January, 1942.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 25 January 1942.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> February TO 31<sup>st</sup> February, 1942, 7 February 1942

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> May TO 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1942, 6 May 1942.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> June TO 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1942, 6 June 1942.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 12 June, 1942.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 27 June, 1942.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> July TO 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1942, 1 July, 1942

The Canadian Veterans Guard consisted of First World War Veterans who wanted to serve but could not qualify for active duty, returning WWII veterans who would not be shipped back overseas, and Canadian soldiers who enlisted after 1944.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 3 July, 1942.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 13 July 1942

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 15 July, 1942

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 28 July, 1942.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> August TO 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1942, 1 August, 1942.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1942

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 18<sup>th</sup> August, 1942.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 19<sup>th</sup> August, 1942.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> September TO 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1942, 1 September, 1942.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 11 September, 1942.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 21 September, 1942.

The soldier from Gravenhurst who had been killed at Dieppe was Hugh Clemmens, 23 years old. It would eventually be clear that he actually died on 19 August 1942, but his parents did not know this. On 29 October 1942, it was reported in the Gravenhurst Banner that Hugh Clemmens' parents had received unofficial word that their son had been killed in a letter written by a friend of Hugh's to his own parents in Toronto mentioning that Hugh had been killed. The Clemmens family believed this unofficial report. It was not until the 17 December 1942 issue of *the Banner* that people learned that the Clemmens' family had finally received an official cablegram announcing Hugh's death. (Courtesy of Gravenhurst Archives, Archivist Judy Humphries)

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> October TO 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1942. 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>, 1942.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1942.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 6 October, 1942.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 10 October, 1942.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 11 October, 1942.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> November TO 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1942, 5<sup>th</sup> October, 1942.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 4<sup>th</sup> November, 1942

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> January TO 31<sup>st</sup> January 1943, 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1943.

This quote brings to bear the issue of what the commandants office meant by "trade in". I do not believe Davis ever bargained to take supplies away from prisoners in exchange for other goods. It can be speculated that Davis

might have been supplying what I suspect to be home goods (things of comfort) of which the POWs would likely have accepted, even though they were not what was officially requested (educational and sporting supplies).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1943.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> February TO 31<sup>st</sup> February 1943. 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1943.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 12 February, 1943.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 17<sup>th</sup> February, 1943.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> April TO 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1943. 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1943.

<sup>52</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits -13." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives. Handwritten notes for sporting requests Bowmanville, Neys, Ozada, Sebee.

<sup>53</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 1. "Report of the First Month of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps by Dr. Jerome Davis." Davis report on Gravenhurst sports for 16<sup>th</sup> December, 1940. 7.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., "Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Month of July 1941." August 1, 1941: 2,12.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., "Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Month of August, 1941." September 1, 1941: 7-8.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of June and July, 1942." August 1942. 4.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of August and September, 1942." October 1, 1942. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of December 1942 and January 1943." February 1943. 10.

<sup>63</sup> Hermann Boeschstein, Accession #B84-0014, Box 1-2, "Series I-III War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)," University of Toronto. University of Toronto Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 20. "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of April, May, and June 1943." 3.

<sup>65</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes Diary 1942." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives. Personal Diary 1942. 13 March, 1942.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 6 May, 1942.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 3 July, 1942.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 11 October, 1942.

<sup>69</sup> Michael O'hagan, 2019. "Camp 132 – Medicine Hat | Michael O'hagan". *Powsincanada.Wordpress.Com*. <https://powsincanada.wordpress.com/tag/camp-132-medicine-hat/>. Archives Canada PA-129146.

<sup>70</sup> Kirk W. Goodlet, "When suitable arrangements could be made" The Geneva Convention, Medical Treatment, and the Repatriation of German POWs in Ontario, 1940-46," *Canadian Military History*, Volume 21, Number 3, (Summer 2012) 3-15.

<sup>71</sup> See endnote 25

<sup>72</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 21 Internment Camp, Espanola, camp "F" Ont War Diary, July 1940- November 1943: RG 24, reel c-5401, file HQS 7236-83-6-21. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'F' #21, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> July TO 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1940. Commandant report 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1940.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Commandant report, 21<sup>st</sup> July, 1940.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1940.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1940.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1940.

<sup>77</sup> Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'F' #21, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> August TO 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1940. Commandant report, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1940.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1940.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1940.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1940.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., Map attached within diary demonstrating the location of the camp as opposed to the sports field.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1940.

<sup>83</sup> Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'F' #21, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> September TO 30<sup>st</sup> September, 1940. Commandant report, 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1940.

<sup>84</sup> Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'F' #21, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> March TO 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1941. Commandant report, 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1941.

<sup>85</sup> Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'F' #21, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> May TO 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1941. Commandant report, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1941.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 17<sup>th</sup> May, 1941.

<sup>87</sup> Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'F' #21, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> June TO 30<sup>st</sup> June, 1941. Commandant report, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1941. Whit-Monday, celebrated the day after Pentecost, a feast date determined by the date of Easter. A traditional European holiday.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 21<sup>st</sup> June, 1941.

<sup>89</sup> Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'F' #21, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> July TO 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1941. Commandant report, 4<sup>th</sup> July 1941.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 31<sup>st</sup> July 1941. 1<sup>st</sup> August 1941, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1941.

<sup>91</sup> Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'F' #21, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> September TO 30<sup>st</sup> September, 1941. Commandant report, 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1941.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> November TO 30<sup>th</sup> November 1942, 12<sup>th</sup> November 1942; 1<sup>st</sup> December TO 31<sup>st</sup> December 1942, 30<sup>th</sup> December 1942 ; 1<sup>st</sup> March TO 31<sup>st</sup> March 1942, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1942.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1942.

<sup>94</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Report #14. "Report of Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of April and May, 1942 by Dr. Jerome Davis." report dated 1 June, 1942.

<sup>95</sup> Tracy Strong: General Secretary of the World Committee, he received a permanent appointment to that office in 1937. In that position he took a leading role in the War Prisoners Aid Program at the outbreak of World War II. He supervised the distribution of educational, recreational, and religious materials to six million prisoners in 30 countries and oversaw the work of the program's secretaries.

<sup>96</sup> Secret War Diary of Internment Camp 'F' #21, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> September TO 30<sup>st</sup> September, 1941. Commandant report, Ibid, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942 TO 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1942; 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1942 TO 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1942; 1<sup>st</sup> August 1942 TO 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1942.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1942.

<sup>98</sup> The Commandant at this time reported more about the general sport community and the guards than the POWs themselves.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> October TO 30<sup>th</sup> October 1942, 4<sup>th</sup> October 1942.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> November TO 3<sup>th</sup> November, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1942.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1943 TO 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1943, 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 1942.

<sup>102</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes on J.D.'s Visits -13." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives. Handwritten notes Espanola Information July 24, 1942 and 25 November, 1942.

<sup>103</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 3. "Of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps by Dr. Jerome Davis." Davis report on Espanola sports for 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1941.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., Official Report # 4. "Of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps by Dr. Jerome Davis." Davis report on Espanola. 3 March, 1941.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., Official Report #11 "Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of November and December 1942" By: Dr. Jerome Davis.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., Official Report #14."Report on the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of April and May 1942" By: Dr. Jerome Davis.

<sup>107</sup> Benjamin Spiro appendix to Ibid, Official Report #21. "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of December 1942 and January 1943," By Dr. Jerome Davis.

<sup>108</sup> European style handballs.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., Report #20, "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of May 1943 and June 1943," By Dr. Jerome Davis.

<sup>110</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes Diary 1942." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives. Personal Diary 1942. 24 July, 1942.

<sup>111</sup> Clarington Development, "The Vision for Jury Lands, Public Presentation," Clarington Development dtah, 13 June 2018, <https://www.clarington.net/en/live-here/resources/Ongoing-Projects/Jury-Lands/061318-Panels.pdf>

<sup>112</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 21 Internment Camp, No. 30 Internment Camp, Bowmanville, Ont War Diary, Oct. 1941-Feb, 1942, June-July 1942, Sept.1942-April 1945: RG 24, vol. 15, 393. Commandant reports 27<sup>th</sup> November 1941, 29<sup>th</sup> of January 1942, 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1942, 1<sup>st</sup> November 1942, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1942, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1943, 30<sup>th</sup> of March 1943.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1942.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 8 June, 1942.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 5 October, 1942.

<sup>116</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Box 3 File 1.

<sup>117</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 21 Internment Camp, No. 30 Internment Camp, Bowmanville, Ont War Diary, Oct. 1941-Feb, 1942, June-July 1942, Sept.1942-April 1945: RG 24, vol. 15, 393. 5 October, 1942.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 16 December, 1942.

<sup>119</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes Diary 1942." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives. Personal Diary 1942. 11 October 1942.

<sup>120</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Hermann Boeschestein Fonds, Box 3 File 1. Roughly translated to:

*When cold comes with ice and snow,  
YMCA thinks of the POW  
With YMCA's help here on the spot  
One Plays Ice Hockey, Canada's Sport*

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1943.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 11<sup>th</sup> January 1943, 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 1943.

<sup>123</sup> Clarington Development, "The Vision for Jury Lands, Public Presentation," Clarington Development dtah, 13 June 2018, <https://www.clarington.net/en/live-here/resources/Ongoing-Projects/Jury-Lands/061318-Panels.pdf>

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Handwritten notes dated 4 November, 1941.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 2 January, 1942.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 26 February 1942, 15 April 1942, 7 July 1942, 10 July 1942, 5 September 1942.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 2 October 1942.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 17 November 1942.

<sup>130</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Handwritten notes dated 20 February 1943.

<sup>131</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 11. "Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of November and December, "by Dr. Jerome Davis Report Dated January 2, 1942."

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., Official Report # 16. "Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of August and September 1942, "by Dr. Jerome Davis.



This is the only evidence found of Davis and his physicality or sport participation. Davis as mentioned in previous chapters came to YMCA War Prisoner Aid sport through previous experience with POWs in WWI as well as through his Christian mission, not a love for sport.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, Official Report #17. "Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of October and November 1942," by Dr. Jerome Davis.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., Official Report #20. Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of April, May and June 1943, "by Dr. Jerome Davis.

<sup>135</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes Diary 1942." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives. Personal Diary 1942. 1 July, 1942.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 26 February, 1942.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 11 December, 1942.

<sup>140</sup> Laura Myers, "Parks Blog, The Web Log of Ontario Parks," Ontario Parks, 25 June 2018, <http://www.ontarioparks.com/parksblog/prisoner-war-camp-provincial-park/>

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 21 Internment Camp, No. 100 Internment Camp, Neys (Middleton), Ont War Diary, January 1941-June 1946: RG 24 , vols. 15, 405-15, 406, commandant report 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1941.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 26 March, 1942.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1942.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, June 1942. 21<sup>st</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, July, 1942, 7<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, August 1942.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1942.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 13<sup>th</sup> October 1942.

<sup>148</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Handwritten notes dated 1, May, 1941.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 2 December, 1941.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., no date attached.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 31 March, 1942.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 28 May, 1942.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 30 July, 1942

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 30 July, 1942

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., November to February 1942.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., November to February 1942.

<sup>157</sup> It is important to understand that monies fundraised in Canada for POW aid were sent to Allied Forces camps overseas for Canadian and British POWs. Such money was not allowed to be spent in Canada for German POWs. Conversely the money raised in Europe and America for war prisoner aid, could be sent to Canada and spent on the German POW there.

<sup>158</sup> Brill. B, "P.O.W. Camp, Neys, Ontario," Nipigon Museum The Blog, 13 September, 2012, <http://nipigonmuseumtheblog.blogspot.com/2012/09/pow-camp-neys-ontario.html>

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Laura Myers, "Parks Blog, The Web Log of Ontario Parks," Ontario Parks, 25 June 2018, <http://www.ontarioparks.com/parksblog/prisoner-war-camp-provincial-park/>

<sup>162</sup><sup>162</sup> Brill. B, "P.O.W. Camp, Neys, Ontario," Nipigon Museum The Blog, 13 September, 2012, <http://nipigonmuseumtheblog.blogspot.com/2012/09/pow-camp-neys-ontario.html>

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Camp Neys ran what was called a Camp School, for POWs amongst their own ranks, camp 100 was the number designation to camp Neys throughout operations.

<sup>164</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 16. "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of August and September, 1942." October 1, 1942.

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<sup>165</sup> Benjamin Spiro appendix to Ibid, Official Report #21. "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of October 1942 and November 1942," By Dr. Jerome Davis.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., Official Report #20 "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of May 1943 and June 1943." February 1943.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Van DER Ven, 437.

<sup>169</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 19. "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of February & March 1943."

## Chapter 4

### YMCA Sponsored Sport in the POW Camps of Alberta, 1939-1943

*“as beautiful a scenic spot [as] can be found, anywhere in North America,”<sup>1</sup>*

Chapter four, not unlike chapter three, presents YMCA and Canadian government records of sporting goods and programming provided by Jerome Davis to Alberta-based camps from 1941 through 1943. Much like Ontario, not all camps in Alberta were in operation at the same time. However, the number of POW camps in Alberta was much smaller—though six camps were slated to operate, only five were actually operational during WWII, and four of them functioned only between 1941 and 1943. It is important to note that when two of the four Alberta camps were built and became operational they were much larger facilities than had ever before been built in Canada. Massive numbers of German POWs arrived in New York City in 1942, immediately boarding trains bound for Southern Alberta. The two main permanent camps, located at Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, each held over 10,000 men, and sometimes more than 12,000. The chart following depicts the years of Alberta POW camp operation from 1941 through 1943, and the number of times Davis visited. Large camp populations of 10,000 men or more provide valuable evidence of the massive challenge the YMCA and Jerome Davis faced at camps located far away from the YMCA of Canada base of operations in Toronto.

**Table 4. Alberta POW Camps Open by Year And # of Davis Inspections**

	1940	1941	1942	1943
Medicine Hat				2
Ozada/Lethbridge			2	3
Kananaskis/Seebe		2	4	0

Davis' mission to supply POWs with sporting goods requested in the years 1941-1943 is well illustrated by the experiences of Camp Ozada (later to become known as Camp Lethbridge #133) and Camp Kananaskis/Seebe (#130). Each were established in remote locations, and each accommodated large POW population numbers. As such, there followed a plethora of official requests, letters, and notes written for and by Davis to the International and Canadian Committee for YMCA War Prisoner Aid. Many of these requested sporting goods and materials to facilitate POW-designed sport activities.<sup>2</sup> Ozada/Lethbridge and Kananaskis/Seebe were the main POW camps in Alberta until Medicine Hat Camp was opened during Davis' last two months (May and June 1943) of work with the YMCA War Prisoner Aid. As such, Ozada/Lethbridge and Kananaskis/Seebe are the main sources of evidence supporting the examination presented in this chapter.

### **Kananaskis/Seebe Camp #130**



*Figure 24 "Guard Tower Duty Camp Kananaskis/Seebe" (Courtesy of Retroactive: Exploring Alberta's Past) <sup>3</sup>*

When the Canadian government officially opened Camp Kananaskis/Seebe in 1939 it was an internment centre for enemy merchant seamen, who, at the time, were classified as civilian internees. It was not until December 1941, with the classification of enemy merchant seamen as official combatant POWs, that Kananaskis/Seebe Camp became officially classified as a purely POW camp.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, all Official Reports, Hand-Written Notes, Personal Diary Entries, and Daily Logs<sup>5</sup> investigated for this study pertain to events from September 1941 through the Spring of 1943.

### **Daily Log, Camp Kananaskis/Seebe, 1941-1943**

Official orders for the removal of enemy merchant seamen dispersed amongst other camps across Canada arrived at Kananaskis/Seebe on 7 September 1941. The report clearly stated that this action was to take place because the “camp [was] to be re-modeled and made into a German Officers P/W camp.”<sup>6</sup> The Daily Log noted: “orders received to the effect that the first line of huts in compound will be moved to make additional space for recreation.”<sup>7</sup> The commandant of Kananaskis/Seebe, while still officially guarding enemy merchant seamen, planned ahead for the necessity of accommodating German Officer POW leisure and sporting activities. The initial contingent of German officer POWs, replacing the enemy merchant seamen, occurred on 25 October 1941.<sup>8</sup>

Davis first visited the newly located Kananaskis/Seebe German officer POWs on 1 November 1941. It was recorded that he toured the POW’s new recreation hall and engaged in “some entertainment.”<sup>9</sup> On 11 November we hear of German Officers’ recreation as recounted in the Daily Log: “the afternoon was spent in such recreation as possible due to weather conditions.”<sup>10</sup> It is quite possible that POWs at Kananaskis/Seebe constructed a skating rink, as had most camps across Canada. Again, as noted on 22 November, with good weather recreation

activities of the POWs occurred.<sup>11</sup> This infers that sport supplies had either arrived with the German officers (likely), that Davis had already deposited some supplies on his first visit (less likely), or that sporting goods had been left behind by the enemy merchant seamen (not likely).

Davis did not return to Kananaskis/Seebe Camp until 28 March 1942.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately there are no details of his visit. However, immediately after his visit, the Daily Log reported on three separate athletics occasions. On 3, 4 and 11 April 1942 POWs participated in “Organized Sports during the afternoon,”<sup>13</sup> indicating that German officers had an established sporting culture in which organized structured participation took place. Inclement winter weather conditions of above average precipitation, until then limiting outdoor sport activity, changed for the better as spring advanced.<sup>14</sup> Having previously been visited by Dr. Conrad Hoffmann, representative of the World International YMCA War Prisoner Aid, and the fact that Kananaskis/Seebe held 600-800 men, it is likely that the POWs at Kananaskis/Seebe had already formed a committee for athletic activities prior to Davis’ arrival.<sup>15</sup> On 9 May 1942 the commandant issued orders for work parties to be cancelled so that POWs could “devote the day to care and maintenance”<sup>16</sup> of the camp compound, thereby allowing POWs to work on the athletic grounds. Such upkeep was normal and was usually reported by Davis in submissions to his superiors. And, on 16 May the commandant reported that the “afternoon [was] spent in organized recreation as far as conditions of the parade grounds [compound] would permit;”<sup>17</sup> indicating that vigorous repair work was necessary to correct conditions wreaked on the athletic grounds by the severe winter weather.

Davis returned to Kananaskis/Seebe on 30 May 1942,<sup>18</sup> at which time he remained overnight in order to interview a greater number of prisoners than normal. The previous chapter indicated Davis interviewed POWs who were members of what he called YMCA committees

(POW-YMCA) concerned with such matters as sport. By the summer of 1942 the same POW-YMCA process at Kananaskis/Seebe was in place. On 7 and 19 July the Daily Log noted that the POWs' afternoon was again devoted to organized sporting activities. On 25 July the Daily Log reported that all POW sports were cancelled due to wet conditions on the playing field (pictured on following page).<sup>19</sup>



*Figure 25, "Athletic/Soccer Field at Kananaskis/Seebe POW Camp" (Courtesy of the wordsmithmill)<sup>20</sup>*

Davis returned to Kananaskis/Seebe Camp on 20 August 1942,<sup>21</sup> again staying overnight due to travelling conditions. Unfortunately, once again the camp Daily Log made no note of Davis' activities during this visit.

On 5 September 1942 afternoon organized sports were again the primary activity of German officer POWs at Kananaskis/Seebe.<sup>22</sup> Davis returned to Kananaskis/Seebe on 18 October 1942, his sixth visit to the camp.<sup>23</sup> He arrived with the Reverend Fritz Soderberg of the World Alliance of Churches, who was intent on observing the religious activities of the camp. They stayed overnight, conducting religious services the following morning. Davis believed that the religious condition of a POW camp was as important and as serious a matter as the athletic condition of a camp. This was not the first time Davis conducted religious services at a POW camp, thereby reiterating his belief that the spiritual life of prisoners was of paramount importance, perhaps even beyond his primary task of supporting sport endeavours.

The assumption that POWs at Kananaskis/Seebe constructed a skating rink for the winter months is confirmed in a report from the Daily Log on 3 January 1943, when a POW was injured while skating and broke his tibia.<sup>24</sup> On 10 January the Daily Log specified that the men had cleared the sports field of snow and participated in a soccer match.<sup>25</sup> The last account of sporting activities at Kananaskis/Seebe Camp from the Daily Log was on 12 April 1943 (coinciding with Davis' departure from the YMCA War Prisoner Aid). It related that the POWs had opened the parade ground/sports field for recreation.<sup>26</sup> Davis did not return to Kananaskis/Seebe Camp to witness or record any of the summer's sporting activities.

### **Davis' Personal Hand-Written Notes, Camp Kananaskis/Seebe, 1941-1943**

When Davis visited Kananaskis/Seebe he jotted some asides in his personal notes. His hand-written notes contain five examples of recorded sports requests. First mentioned in Davis' file on the POWs at Kananaskis/Seebe is that they could be kept busy by chopping down a stand of burnt-out forest he saw on his way through the Kootenay Pass, suggesting that it could be used



for firewood.<sup>27</sup> However, the forestry department, having greater knowledge of fires and erosion containment, was not initially receptive to the idea.

Camp Kananaskis/Seebe POWs presented their first major sporting goods request to Davis on 29 March 1942. As an officers-only POW camp, their sporting goods requests reflected their upper social class backgrounds. Elite sports equipment was requested, such as supplies for racquetball<sup>28</sup> and pole-vaulting. Their requests consisted of

1. One 16-18ft Pole-vaulting pole
2. One 11.5lb Iron ball
3. One Medicine ball
4. Ten dozen Ping pong balls
5. Thirty pairs of gym shoes ranging sizes of 6-10
6. Twenty white sleeveless jerseys in sizes 34-40
7. White thread for repairs or to make Sport shorts [sic]
8. Filling for Wrestling mat
9. Canvas duck to mat wrestling mat 5 yards x 5 yards, 1 foot thick (24 yards canvass) trade weight 12 oz
10. Two soccer balls
11. 4 racquet balls<sup>29</sup>

By 12 May 1942 a measure of the goods “ordered” had not yet reached Camp Kananaskis/Seebe. So, on behalf of Davis, Mr. Kingersley, General Secretary of the Calgary YMCA and Director of the YMCA National Council War Services,<sup>30</sup> ordered \$48.13 worth of sporting goods to be sent to Camp Kananaskis/Seebe. Davis had previously spoken to the Calgary YMCA Board of Directors on 21 November 1941 requesting that they focus their War Work efforts on aiding the work being carried out in Alberta POW camps.<sup>31</sup> The message Davis gave seemed to have been effective. The order which Kingersley received and implemented consisted of:

1. Thirty Pairs of running shoes @ \$36.90
2. One Hundred and Twenty Ping pong balls @ \$3.75
3. Three Softball Bats @ \$1.88
4. One Softball Glove @ \$2.79
5. 3 Softballs @ \$2.85<sup>32</sup>

The last three items had not been a part of the original request list received by Davis from the POWs, which leads one to believe that subsequent lists may have made their way to Davis in the interim. It is also a possibility that some of the goods were destined for the guards at Kananaskis/Seebe. The camp's Daily Log often noted baseball matches involving the camp's guards.<sup>33</sup>

On 31 May 1942, POWs at Kananaskis/Seebe Camp submitted another request list for Davis' consideration. They reiterated the need for "material for wrestling mats already asked March 29<sup>th</sup>." The list noted the following:

1. Weights 50-lb for barbells
2. Rope 1" 26 feet
3. Cloth line 2 coils for mats
4. Punching ball
5. Soccer outfits, balls, boots, nets, twine
6. For several football teams, gym pants in different colors each ten- light blue, light green, red sz 34-36. To be paid by canteen prices 0.50 to 0.60
7. 40 square feet- canvas 12 oz thread weight<sup>34</sup>

The request for more soccer equipment and supplies suggests that Davis supported the Kananaskis/Seebe POWs in building a second soccer pitch. Davis added a short appended note at the end of the Kananaskis/Seebe Camp request; as the camp already had parallel bars, a horizontal bar was needed and the POWs were to send him the details of this request.<sup>35</sup> As a side note of interest, it was the Calgary YMCA which eventually purchased the parallel bars from the POW camp auction in 1946 after the war ended and prisoner operations ceased. As a partner with Davis in working with local POW camps, the Calgary YMCA was well situated in knowing what goods were available for purchase at the camp after Europe's "great conflict" ceased.

On 21 August 1942 Davis wrote a reminder to himself that the POWs at Kananaskis/Seebe had returned 30 pairs of football (soccer) shoes to the YMCA main office in Toronto requesting replacement pairs in sizes of 6 ½ and 8.<sup>36</sup> These were already paid for,

denoted by Calgary General Secretary Kingersley after a request forwarded to him by Davis. A delay of four months (May to August) for an order of 30 pairs of football shoes seems excessive, but it behooves the reader to consider once again the remoteness of Kananaskis/Seebe Camp; it was located 100 kilometers from Calgary. The closest town was Banff (45 Kilometers distant), which had no sporting goods stores that could fill such an order.

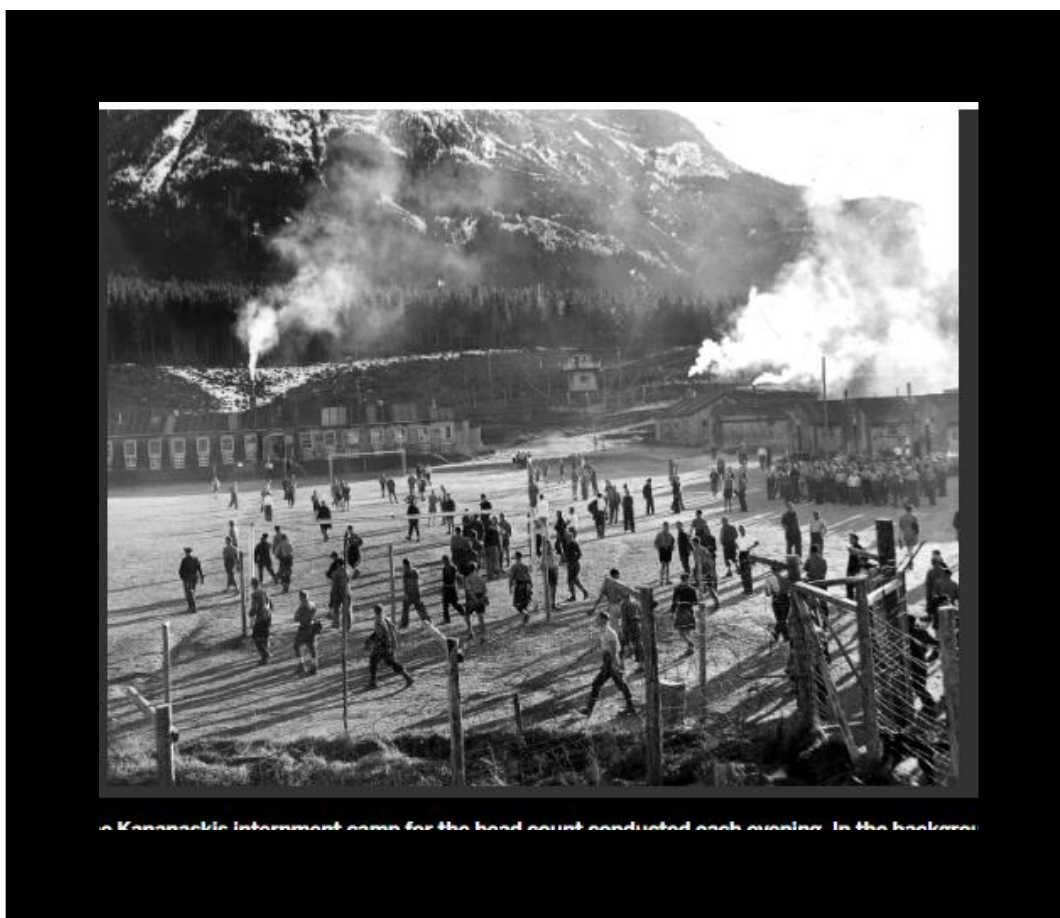


Figure 26 "German POW Que for count" (Courtesy of the Ottawa Citizen)<sup>37</sup>

### **Davis' Official Committee of War Prisoner Aid in Canada Reports, Kananaskis/Seebe, 1940-1943**

Davis' official reports for Kananaskis/Seebe Camp contain six pieces of data specific to this investigation. Davis' first report indicated that he had secured "Moving picture shows to be

held in the recreation center.” He also noted that he “secured the active co-operation of the local Y.M.C.A. secretary,” none other than Mr. Kingersley, General Secretary of the Calgary YMCA. And, as noted previously, this procurement avenue became convenient for Davis when his requests for the POWs at Kananaskis/Seebe accelerated and orders either became lost or goods harder to secure.<sup>38</sup> Davis grappled with two important issues: (1) that recreational pursuits other than sport were important and needed to take the space of sport when necessary, and (2) that without the help of YMCAs across Canada, the International YMCA War Prisoner Aid could not facilitate prisoner requests with one hundred percent effectiveness. Davis understood that when he encountered POW camps located in Canada West logistical issues arose when supplies had to be shipped from headquarters in Toronto. Time of shipment for goods, as well as simple administrative procedures for filing sport requests, could be easier and more rapidly facilitated through Calgary. It was through Davis’ contact and co-operation with the Director of the Calgary YMCA that he was able to fulfill some of his more difficult sporting goods requests.

Davis’ official reports recorded another specific mention of Kananaskis/Seebe Camp. In report #11 (2 January 1942)<sup>39</sup> Davis made a literary note that Camp Kananaskis lies in “the midst of perhaps as beautiful a scenic spot [as] can be found, anywhere in North America,”<sup>40</sup> emphasizing his belief that an aesthetic location resonated with most POWs. He continued his report, stating that at Kananaskis/Seebe “footballs, ping-pong balls and hockey equipment [had been] secured.”<sup>41</sup> A growing number of supplies were needed. Davis, two years into his tenure of working with the German POWs in Canada, recognized that although Kananaskis POWs were officers, and therefore receiving wages from Germany, their needs required financing of sporting goods from YMCA donation sources. Especially was this so as the war dragged on and POW wages from Germany disappeared completely for officers as well as enlisted men.

In Report #16 (1 October 1942) Davis wrote that “here in camp no.130 they have a good athletic program with tennis, football and all other outdoor sport.”<sup>42</sup> Davis often wrote more about camp locations and what he described as scenic majestic landscapes than he did about the actual condition of camp sport programs. To Davis, the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains alone contributed towards sustaining POWs located “out west.” Davis’ Report #17 contained a brief notation of Kananaskis/Seebe Camp; it is “one of the best camps in Canada. All the work, including... athletics is going well.”<sup>43</sup> Perhaps not exactly a glowing endorsement, but the term “going well” demonstrated that Davis was confident that the Canadian Government and YMCA provision of comforts to the POWs at Kananaskis/Seebe Camp was proceeding efficiently and effectively.

Report #19 noted the Camp Commandant’s attitude towards the POWs and Davis. Davis explained that “the camp commandant omit[ed] his daily visits [with POW leaders] to leave [Davis] more freedom to talk with the camp leader.”<sup>44</sup> This statement reveals that: (1) the camp commandant held daily meetings with the elected camp leader in order to keep tabs on daily happenings, plans, or POW needs. This made him an effective warden and at the same time (2) the camp commandant became keenly aware that the camp leader spoke more freely to Davis without his (commandants) presence.



Figure 23 "Camp commandant and staff entering compound" (Courtesy of Ghost Towns of Alberta)<sup>45</sup>

This marks a stark contrast between Ontario and Alberta Camp commandants supervision approaches. In Ontario Davis was more heavily supervised in meetings with camp-elected leaders, interpreters, or in conducting interviews outside the camp compound. Report #19 also cited that Davis was apparently told by the camp leader: "as they say, they have everything but freedom,"<sup>46</sup> an aside that supports Davis' viewpoint on the better than average conditions at Kananaskis/Seebe Camp. Davis concluded Report #19 by commenting that, "during the wintertime, they are skating, playing ping-pong and when the snow is not too deep, playing soccer."<sup>47</sup> As Kananaskis/Seebe was located on the eastern foothills plain of the Rocky Mountains it was directly affected by the Chinook winds (a warm front occurring on average of once a

month or more, that descends down the mountains, typically melting snow). Chinook conditions at times allowed the POWs to participate in winter soccer. Report #19 also suggested that the skating rink was in an area of the camp apart from the main yard. Where the skating rink was is not known, but its being present reflects steady growth of sports grounds and activity involvement of POWs at Camp Kananaskis/Seebe.

Among the last of Davis' official reports was report #20. In it he left a detailed report for his successor. He described that Kananaskis/Seebe POWs had an "athletic field about 300 by 160 feet; a gymnasium about 52 by 24 feet; a tennis court and a skating rink. They have good parallel bars and horizontal bar furnished by the YMCA; barbell, mats, vaulting horse; weightlifting bar and so forth. They have two ping-pong tables. They have the usual assortment of indoor games..."<sup>48</sup> Clearly Davis left POW sporting activities at Camp Kananaskis in good shape. Davis' official Report #20 confirmed that the POWs received a plethora of sporting goods, enough to furnish a camp of approximately 635 men. Davis and the local Calgary YMCA managed to amass a supply of sporting goods that made, in Davis' estimate, Kananaskis the best of Canadian POW camps. It is evident that, even though he could not make as many trips to the isolated Western camps as in Ontario, he in no way avoided his responsibility or belief in his mission of providing the necessary sporting goods to make POW lives more bearable.



Figure 24 "Camp Kananaskis/Seebe"( Courtesy of The Galt Museum and Archives)<sup>49</sup>



Figure 25 "Camp Kananaskis/Seebe Winter"( Courtesy of The Galt Museum and Archives)<sup>50</sup>



## **Davis' Personal Diary Kananaskis/Seebe, 1942**

Davis' personal diary contains a mere two brief notations involving sport on his visits to Camp Kananaskis/Seebe. This may be due to the extensive time it took for him to reach the camps, and then eventually return to Eastern Canada, thereby giving him more time to reflect and straighten out request matters. Unfortunately for the researcher his Kananaskis/Seebe accounts are often "mixed in" with accounts relative to his visits to Ozada/Lethbridge and Medicine Hat POW camps. This is understandable, as he visited all three camps in succession over a two-day period.

Davis' first personal diary account involving sport on Kananaskis/Seebe Camp occurred on 30 May 1942. He reported that after visiting Ozada POW camp he arrived at Kananaskis/Seebe and immediately visited with the camp POW-YMCA committee, on which occasion the sport representative was present. That visit, conducted in the compound, elicited no comment other than mentioning his departure with requests he hoped to facilitate.<sup>51</sup>

Davis' final diary entry relative to sport occurred on 20 August 1942, at which time he saw men sawing wood and enjoying themselves while doing so. He also noted that he "talked over swimming pool" matters with the men. Lacking detail, it is assumed the POWs at Kananaskis/Seebe envisioned building swimming facilities. This was the first mention of the Kananaskis POWs requesting swimming facilities.<sup>52</sup> As noted in Davis' official account of facilities present at Kananaskis/Seebe Camp by the end of his tenure, a swimming facility remained unaccomplished. On 20 August as well, he once again met with their designated POW-YMCA committee to facilitate final requests.<sup>53</sup>

It is unfortunate that Davis' work with the International YMCA War Prisoner Aid ended at about the time the largest of all POW camps in Canada (Lethbridge and Medicine Hat) were

just beginning to be put into use. Although Kananaskis/Seebe was a relatively small POW camp, the data does in fact attest that even though Davis did not leave much in the way of official records, he did believe that his mission was one that extended to all POW camps established in Canada.

### **Camp Medicine Hat #132**



*Figure 26 PoW Hockey Team at Camp 132, Medicine Hat (Courtesy Library and Archives Canada)<sup>54</sup>*



*figure 27 view of guard towers at the POW Camp in Medicine Hat Ca.1948 (Courtesy Esplanade Archives, 0590.0017).<sup>55</sup>*

### **Daily Log Reports, Davis' Official Committee of War Prisoner Aid in Canada Reports, and Davis' Personal Diary: Camp Medicine Hat, 1943**

Unfortunately for this examination's purposes, Davis' personal diary cannot be used as a source to glean knowledge of sporting activities at POW Camp #132 Medicine Hat. The camp opened in the summer of 1943, some months before Davis left the International YMCA War Prisoner Aid program. What can be gleaned from Davis' diary, however, is that he visited the camp on 21 October 1942 at which time he noted that "some 36 buildings were up," none of

which had a roof. The barbed wire surrounding the compound had yet to be fully installed. The electric and water hookups were not yet operational. The camp was thought to be possibly ready by mid January “if the contractor hurried up.”<sup>56</sup> Unknown to Davis was that construction of camp facilities was delayed due to unseasonably cold weather for over a month.<sup>57</sup>

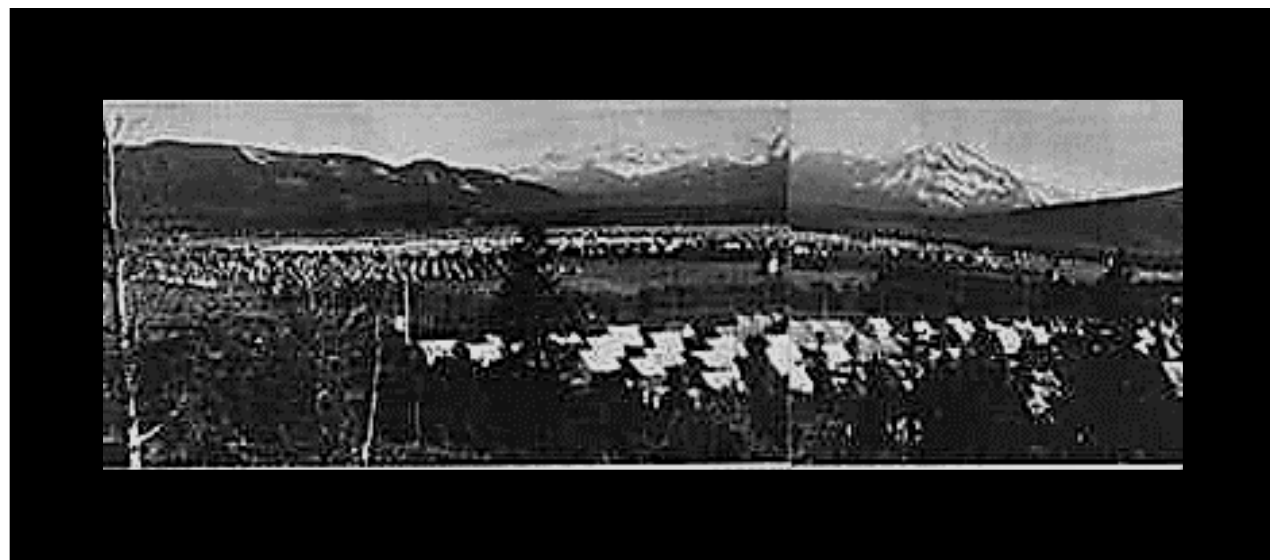
Absent from Medicine Hat Camp in official Daily Log entries are athletic culture-related notations, except for the following: 11 February 1943 contractor workers again resumed work on the POW recreation hut.<sup>58</sup> Alberta winter conditions were often brutal. On 11 February when construction resumed the Camp Daily Log reported; “Temperature 26 degrees below. Strong wind during the night drifted snow blocking roads. Chinook set in and temperature rose to 30 degrees above.”<sup>59</sup> It only due to periodic Chinook conditions that construction in winter could progress at Medicine Hat. Noted by the Commandant’s office (but not by Davis) was that construction of buildings in which sport might function during the winter months was difficult, especially within a scheduled timeline. Excluded from this chapter are any hand-written notes by Davis pertaining to Medicine Hat POW Camp. None survive, even if indeed they once existed.

There are, however, two official reports from Davis that mention Medicine Hat POW Camp #132. They are short, but are as follows: Report #15, dated August 1942, noted that the new camps were being built at Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, and that POWs awaiting confinement in the new camps, were temporarily housed in tents at Camp Ozada.<sup>60</sup> Acknowledged by Davis was his awareness that the new large camps under construction would feature massive recreation huts, in place by the time “POW transfers” arrived at their new permanent camp.

Davis’ second official report relative to of Medicine Hat Camp was Report #20, written jointly by Davis and his successor, Hermann Boeschenstein. It documented that “one large camp

has been opened, no. 132,”<sup>61</sup> populated with three thousand men. Spokesmen’s requests for sports “were perhaps not very different from those that are made by older camps...the camp possesses two new recreational halls which are nearing completion.”<sup>62</sup> Davis and Boeschenstein’s comparison of Medicine Hat sports requests to those of other camps leads one to believe that the requests were quite large. That the recreation halls were not complete may have been due to the fact that the government was more concerned with completing weatherproof sleeping accommodations and facilities for the religious life of the POWs.<sup>63</sup> Davis and his successor focused much of their attention on the incomplete recreational halls. Thus, it can be said that even though Davis never was the chief YMCA War Prisoner Aid facilitator for Medicine Hat POW camp, he cared greatly for the athletic needs of these internees.

### **Camp Ozada/Lethbridge #133, 1942-1943**



*Figure 28 "OZADA TENT CAMP"( Courtesy of Ghost towns of Alberta)<sup>64</sup>*

From its inception, Camp #133 Ozada/Lethbridge, known simply as Camp Ozada, was located within the vast Stoney Indian Reserve at the confluence of the Kananaskis and Bow

Rivers, approximately 80 kilometers west of Calgary. It was originally designed to be a “holdover camp” until the planned camps at Lethbridge and Medicine Hat were finished. Both POWs and their guards were housed in leaky WWI tents.<sup>65</sup> The brutality of the Canadian winter of 1942-43 would have likely reminded Davis of his work with POWs in Russia during WWI.<sup>66</sup>



*Figure 29 “Ozada camp” (Courtesy of WWII in color)<sup>67</sup>*

### **Daily Log, Camp Ozada/Lethbridge, 1942-1943**

Regarding prisoner populations and Government records the Daily Log accounts for both Ozada, and Camp Lethbridge combined to provide a single record, despite the move of both

camps' directly following Christmas in December of 1942. It was on 10 May 1942 that the Daily Log reported a shipment of 521 POWs from Ontario's overcrowded Gravenhurst Camp, bringing the official number of POWs at Ozada to over 5,000 men.<sup>68</sup> Despite the huge number of prisoners under their custodianship, the Veterans Guard of Canada<sup>69</sup> saw fit to organize a second anniversary celebration, complete with a sports afternoon, which, unfortunately, according to the Daily Log, had to be cancelled due to rain.<sup>70</sup> The Government of Canada and Jerome Davis' belief that sports could relieve stress proved to be as accurate for those guarding the POWs as it was for the POWs themselves. Despite the stress of official duties, sports were as much a part of the guards' life as they were for the POWs. While guards would not have had as difficult a time obtaining sporting goods, it is a safe assumption that YMCA men like Davis did their best to supply both guards and POWs with the sport materials they required.

Davis' first official visit to Camp Ozada occurred on 30 May 1942. The commandant's office reported none of his activities within the camp.<sup>71</sup> The Daily Log did, however, reinforce how important athletics were in the lives of the Veterans Guard. On 28 June 1942 inter-company softball games were played by the guards, much to the interest of the POWs. On 1 July 1942 (Dominion Day), a full sports meet was organized by and for the guards, inasmuch as their scheduled duties allowed their participation.<sup>72</sup>

On 31 August 1942 the camp commandant's office took special note that "P.O.W.'s held big sports meeting today, they were excluded from evening count." The morning count totalled 9,662 men.<sup>73</sup> Davis' records reflect mounting requests from POWs in preparation for their sports day. The sports meeting itself was such a success among the POWs that the commandant rewarded them by cancelling the evening count.

Davis' next visit to Ozada occurred on 19 October 1942. He was accompanied by the Reverend Fritz Soderberg. As previously noted no camp record reported on the activities of Davis or his companion during the visit.<sup>74</sup> It is important to note here that no more events pertaining to sport were reported in the Daily Log. There are three reasons for this: (1) The reports were inundated with complaints of camp conditions, leaking tents, ruined food stores, and the constant rain and snow conditions that persisted during the winter and spring of 1942. Camp Ozada was indeed a "horrible mess." (2) In 1942 Camp Ozada, formerly the "home" of only 5,000 POWs, received a shipment of 10,000 troops from Rommel's defeated Afrika Corps, all of whom arrived ill-prepared for winter. With these two factors predominating, camp reports were paired down to the pure essentials that the commandant felt needed to be reported. (3) A third reason must be posed: adverse weather conditions seldom encouraged outdoor sporting activities.

### **Davis' Hand-Written Notes, Ozada/Lethbridge, 1942-1943**

Davis' hand-written notes are important as evidence attesting to the energies he expended on suppling the Ozada/Lethbridge Camps with requested and much needed sporting supplies. Davis' first large request is documented in his notes from 1 June 1942, entitled "Summer 1942 Request Sheet,"<sup>75</sup> appropriately subtitled, "Urgently Required Sports Articles for Summer 1942 in Camp #133."<sup>76</sup> Translated from German, the POWs requested the following items and quantities:

1. Twelve soccer balls
2. Eight handballs
3. Twenty footballs (American) without threads
4. Four 16lb medicine balls
5. Twenty-four football boots of various sizes
6. Twenty-four sport kits (uniforms) of various sizes
7. Five Dozen football (European) Repair Kits



8. Fifty laces for balls
9. Ten threading needles for footballs
10. Five foot pumps
11. Three 15lb shotputs
12. Four 10lb shotputs
13. One measuring tape
14. Four stopwatches
15. Six pairs boxing gloves (8-12oz)
16. Two dozen wraps/bandages
17. One package magnesium
18. Two dozen ping-pong bats
19. Eight ping pong nets
20. Six ping pong tables
21. One set horizontal bars
22. One set parallel bars<sup>77</sup>

Such a long and detailed request list suggests that the POWs of Camp Ozada more than simply enjoyed sports participation; they revelled in it. Of course, it could be argued, too, that the large number of POWs “drove” the “request intensity.” Requests for sporting goods make up the bulk of Davis’ handwritten notes pertinent to his POW Camp Ozada visits.

Davis’ second request in his hand notes was dated 8 August 1942. In them, he noted an appeal for:

1. 3000 pairs of skates sz 6-9 and few 10 (they will pay)
2. Sweaters as many as possible 6000 (pullovers)
3. A gross set of tennis balls
4. What essential they NEED 500 skates[pairs] [sic]

It was obvious to Davis that the YMCA War Prisoner Aid, charged with providing winter sporting goods in all camps, would find it most difficult if not impossible to supply more than 500 pairs of skates to any one camp.,

Following Davis’ August 1942 request he made a note to send a letter to Dr. Benjamin P. Spiro, head of Toronto YMCA supply shipments. His eventual letter requested the following “as soon as possible”:

1. 120 [pairs] sneakers from Eatons (POW will pay)

2. 10 soccer balls size 5
3. 5- 16lb shotputs
4. 10 doz ping-pong balls
5. 10 lbs chalk (magnesium) for hands in parallel and horizontal bar work

Note\* to be sent direct to camp elected leader<sup>78</sup>

Even when he did not personally visit Ozada and Lethbridge Camp, Davis' received requests. In fact, most requests from Ozada and Lethbridge to Davis arrived by post to Toronto's YMCA offices, typed and often pre-translated by English speaking POWs.<sup>79</sup> In fact, when Ozada camp expanded from 5,000 men to well over 12,000, requests to Davis by mail through Toronto became more frequent and lengthy. Davis' next request arrived on 31 August 1942:

1. 30 footballs size 5
2. Volleyballs
3. 9 shot-puts 16lbs
4. 2 tape measures 50 feet long
5. 600 ping-pong balls/mth
6. 120 [pairs]sneakers<sup>80</sup>

Davis dedicatedly wrote down the needs of all camp requests, doing all he could for as many men as possible.

A Davis hand-written report of note dates to 15 October 1942, in which he stated he sent to POW Frischmuth (Athletics committee representative) the bills to be paid by the POWs at Ozada for sporting goods (as per POW agreement) provided during the months of September to June. They totaled \$573.95. Funds spent by the YMCA for sporting goods at Ozada, which the POWs agreed to pay were as follows:

1. September 3, ping- pong balls @ \$11.00
2. September 17, Mending of balls @ \$63.00
3. October 6, Ping-pong stocks @ \$15.15
4. June 17, Soccer boots [pairs] @ \$ 484.80<sup>81</sup>

Davis' 6<sup>th</sup> request from Ozada Camp dates to 18 October 1942. POWs requested:

1. 15 sets tennis nylon for racquet repair

2. Skates [pairs]
  - a. 15- size 6
  - b. 15- 6 ½
  - c. 25- 7
  - d. 25 7 ½
  - e. 50- 8
  - f. 70- 8 ½
  - g. 50- 9
  - h. 25- 9 ½
  - i. 15- 10
  - j. 10- 11

Total 300 [pairs]
3. Football Shoes [pairs] (will pay for)
  - a. 12- 6
  - b. 12- 6 ½
  - c. 24- 7, 7 ½, 8, 8 ½
  - d. 10- 9, 9 ½
  - e. 5- 10, 11
4. Boxing gloves to last 5 months
  - a. 20 pairs 8oz
5. 30 skipping ropes or 75 meters rope
6. 10 rubber teeth protectors
7. 30 tennis balls (they will pay)<sup>82</sup>

The POWs quickly realized that such large requests for skates, often numbering in the thousands of pairs, had little chance of being filled. Thus began smaller quantities of requested goods with more variety to facilitate all or as many sports as possible, even if participation numbers would have to be low, or a reorganization of time allotment for use of the goods. The POWs also expanded their winter activities beyond skating and soccer to include boxing.<sup>83</sup>

Davis jotted a note dated 19 October 1942 referring to some consequence. He wrote: “they will pay for music program if we pay for athletics.”<sup>84</sup> This is significant because musical instruments and sheet music were particularly expensive and more difficult for the YMCA to accumulate or rationalize than sporting goods.

Some of Davis' hand-written notes for Ozada/Lethbridge Camp are undated. They are as follows:

Undated Request #1

1. 300 skates [pairs] (they pay half, they will have 4 rinks)
2. String for 8 nets
3. 10 pucks
4. 90 hockey sticks
5. 10 goal sticks
6. 7 goal protectors
7. 3 American rugby footballs
8. 30 pairs gym shorts
9. Book of rugby rules
10. They ask if 30 pairs football shoes sent back will be returned with proper sizes.
11. 30 pairs football shoes
12. 150 pairs football shoes (they will pay, Davis and Spiro to inspect before sent due to quality complaints)
13. 20 footballs #5
14. 10 sets repair materials
15. 20 volleyballs (leather if not leather 3mm thick to make themselves)
16. Material to make 150 pairs gym shorts blue and red.<sup>85</sup>

This Davis note demonstrates that even before the December 1942 move of Ozada POWs to Camp Lethbridge, they were already requesting skates for the planned four rinks that were eventually built by the POWs after their arrival in Lethbridge. This note also marks an expansion of the sports program into interests that are specifically North American (American) Football.<sup>86</sup> Supplies and requests for typically American and Canadian sporting goods were easier for Davis to obtain through suppliers in New York, arranged by the International War Prisoner Aid offices there.

Another Davis undated Ozada note follows: "The camp at Ozada is a huge place in the prairie with barbed wire surrounding it about two miles around. It is very cold at night but warm in the day time. No electric lights inside the camp ground since they expect to move the men in the winter to another camp."<sup>87</sup> Davis appears to have written this comment as a reminder of the

POWs harsh circumstances and why they badly needed the requested goods. It is likely that the report was written by Davis contiguous to his first visit in June 1942, as summer conditions on the Palliser Triangle were indicative of its desert climate.<sup>88</sup>

Undated Request #2 is as follows:

1. 12 #5 soccer balls
2. 8 #3 soccer balls
3. 20 American footballs
4. 23 yards rope
5. Repair kits for soccer balls .90cent
6. 10 doz new soccer shorts
  - a. 5 doz red
  - b. 5 doz blue
7. 10 doz soccer boots [pairs] (prisoners pay)
8. 3 dozen ping-pong balls
9. 4 medicine balls
  - a. 1 @9lb
  - b. 1 @7lb
  - c. 2 @9 lb already on order
10. 4 dozen rawhide laces for soccer balls
11. 5 ball pumps
12. Five threading needles
13. 4 stop watches
14. 1 measuring tape for sports
15. Boxing gloves
  - a. 3 sets 8oz
  - b. 3 sets 12oz \$8.75
16. 2 doz knee bandages \$6.00
17. Magnesium for bar work
18. Chest expanders 8 @ 3.85 each

Finally Davis' undated notations are concluded by Request #3:

1. 24 pairs soccer boots @\$139.20
  2. 96 pairs soccer boots @\$345.60
- Total \$484.80  
[POW soccer boot pairs] pay for 50.

It might be that some of Davis' request lists included been "repeats" from lists compiled earlier.

However, when Ozada camp expanded from 5,000 men to over 12,000, sporting goods requests

vastly increased in numbers and frequency. With the subsequent move to Lethbridge, with its two new large recreation halls, more varied sports endeavors were pursued. However, much of the expansions of sports at Lethbridge Camp were facilitated by Davis' successor. There is no doubt though that Davis was the main facilitator and procurer of sporting goods to Ozada Camp from its establishment through the summer of 1943.

### **Davis' Official Committee of War Prisoner Aid in Canada Reports, Ozada/Lethbridge, 1942-1943**

Davis officially reported on Ozada Camp in Report #17 for the months of October to November 1942. He wrote: "electricity is not available...this is simply an emergency camp...waiting for permanent camp to be built. There are over 12,000 men in this camp."<sup>89</sup> In this report he reflected on the active sporting life of the POWs, stating "the athletic work is going well. They have large numbers of football teams [and] six tennis courts."<sup>90</sup> The amount of labour and equipment needed to build a level football pitch and six tennis courts cost a substantial sum of money, and man-hour labour. Undoubtedly the man-power was at hand. With that obstacle remedied the YMCA War Prisoner Aid was more than willing to supply the needed requirements for the development of POW sporting endeavours.

In December 1942, the Ozada POWs were transferred to the permanent camp at Lethbridge. All 12,000 men made the journey, minus four men attempting escape.<sup>91</sup> It was at the permanent camp that sport endeavours of the POWs became much more expansive. Firstly, there were two large recreation buildings which could accommodate over 1,000 men each and, as Davis reported, "several ice-hockey rinks have been built and we have sent in skates."<sup>92</sup> The

POWs, obviously pleased with their much-improved accommodations, had both the time and inclination to greatly enlarge their athletic endeavours.

It was not until the months of February and March 1943 that Davis took the time to mention the recreation huts. In his official report he wrote, “the two big recreation huts which are built each to hold three to five thousand men are now fully completed.”<sup>93</sup> The POWs had moved in while they were still under construction. Davis noted that the buildings were going to greatly increase the recreational lives of the POWs. He continued his assessment of the camp: “in the field of sports they are extremely active, playing now during the winter time ice-hockey, table tennis, and boxing. For the summer they are already asking for a number of soccer balls and the necessary materials for all light athletics.”<sup>94</sup> Moments in the lives of POWs at Lethbridge were sometimes recorded by photographs taken by YMCA or camp security personnel. Sport teams were often the subject matter of the photos, many of which were made into postcards and sent home to loved ones. The pictures below are three examples.



*Figure 30 Soccer Team at Camp Lethbridge #133 (Courtesy Galt Museum Archives)<sup>95</sup>*



Figure 31 "German Acrobatic Team in Lethbridge" (Courtesy of The Galt Museum and Archives)<sup>96</sup>

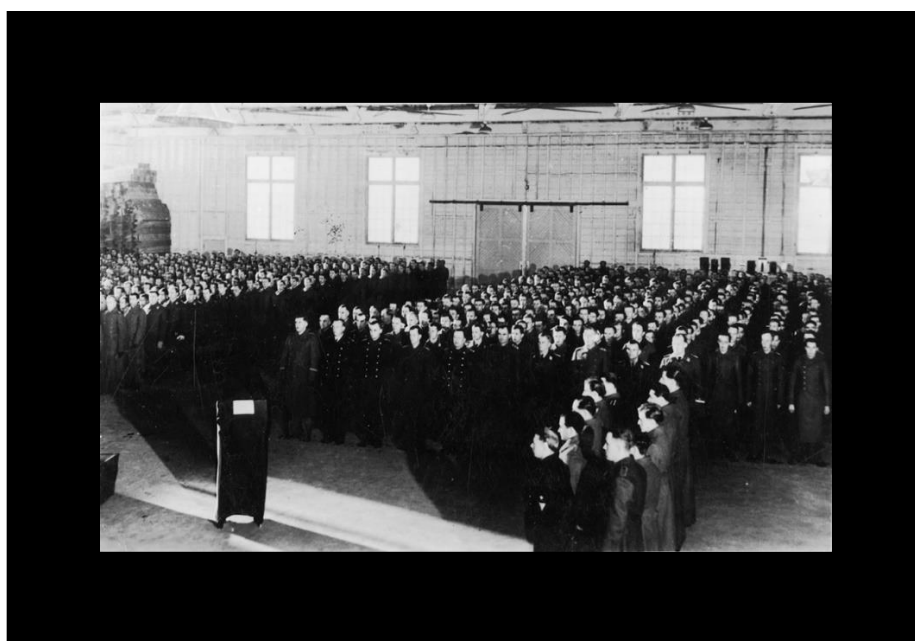


Figure 32 "German POWs in Lethbridge Recreation Building" (Courtesy of The Galt Museum and Archives)<sup>97</sup>



## **Davis' Personal Diary, Ozada/Lethbridge, 1942**

Davis' diary for 1942 notes four entries for his visits to the POWs at both Ozada and Lethbridge Camps. His first mention of Ozada Camp is dated 30 May 1942, in which he reported that several POWs complained to him that their belongings had been stolen. Davis reported this to the camp commandant and was assured it would be taken care of.<sup>98</sup>

His second Ozada notation was made on 18 August 1942. He did not report on the sports of the POWs, but rather on an incident that resulted in Colonel Armstrong (Assistant commandant) and Captain Milne as well as three other officers of the guard, being taken hostage by the POWs.<sup>99</sup> The incident occurred upon the arrival of a "previously elected camp leader" who refused to remove his uniform for inspection upon arrival. When he was detained by officers and placed in isolation, the prisoners in turn detained the officers who were in the camp compound at the time. It is important to note that Ozada and Lethbridge Camps interned POWs who were considered hard-line extreme Nazis. Such men, usually more violent, were motivated towards preserving the Nazi ideological "world cause." Davis provided no insight as to the incident's resolution, except to say that all was resolved.

On 19 August 1942, Davis noted that while visiting Ozada he was invited to visit the tennis courts, watch an entire football match, and hold a meeting with all the elected POW-YMCA Committee officers. Davis' enthusiasm in watching the football match can be seen in his florid script and expressive language in recording the exciting things he observed and participated in that day at Kananaskis. A debate on the war's progress and whether democracy was the world's best form of governance also featured as part of the day's recorded events.<sup>100</sup>

Davis' final mention of Lethbridge noted on 21 October 1942, when he visited the under-construction Lethbridge Camp, commenting on how the recreation huts were not yet finished but

that they should be the contractors' first order of business. Did Davis think that recreation was more important than adequate bunks for the men? It is a legitimate question to ask. Before departing Davis made sure to set up a credit account at the nearest Eaton's [Calgary?] Department Store for the POWs at Lethbridge under the International YMCA accounts.

## **Conclusion**

The Canadian government had offered little rationale for encouraging sport participation, even as a means of occupying a prisoner's leisure time thus enhancing the prevention of escape attempt. The YMCA and Jerome Davis, on the other hand, extended and reinforced original Christian messages, which offered a much more distinct reasoning for encouraging sport. After all, the YMCA had built itself into a worldwide organization through the Muscular Christian movement and message of masculinity through religious sport endeavours. While it cannot be said that Davis or other YMCA camp inspectors and suppliers thought sport would convert all German POWs into good Christian men, it can be stated that it was their Christian charitable spirit and knowledge of working with young men (a distinguishing identity in the German military machine) that facilitated the YMCA's and Davis' steady support and supply of sporting goods to prisoners in isolated Alberta POW camps.

Davis' dedicated provision of sporting equipment to isolated Alberta POWs underscored his ideological goals: (1) to lend a helping hand to the least of God's people; (2) a belief that sport was not only a character building exercise but a necessary part of German POW life; and (3) a responsibility to achieve his mission in the fulfillment of sports needs. In closing his last solo report (#19), Davis declared "I want to state the pleasure it has been to be able to bring some light to the life of the men behind the barbed wire."<sup>101</sup> Davis' complex mission was to provide

comforts for the German POW stationed in all of Canada. Quite humbly he left his position knowing he had done what he had set out to accomplish.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report #11."Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of November and December By Dr. Jerome Davis." Dated 2 January 1942.

<sup>2</sup> Camp Medicine Hat #132 will not be included in this Chapters data reports, due to two factors: 1. Medicine Hat Camp construction was delayed due to unseasonable weather and did not open until the Spring of 1943, the exact time of Davis retiring from his position with the YMCA; 2. What reports on the sport activities that do exist regarding Medicine Hat are from Hermann Boeschentien and will be covered briefly in Chapter 6.

<sup>3</sup> Hoar, E. (2019). *POW and Internment Camps in Alberta: WWII*. [online] RETROactive. Available at: <https://albertashistoricplaces.wordpress.com/2017/11/01/pow-and-internment-camps-in-alberta-wwii/> [Accessed 26 Feb. 2019].

<sup>4</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No. 130 Internment Camp, Seebe, Alta, War Diary, September 1939- June 1946: RG 24 , vols. 15, 408-15, 409, Kananaskis Internment Camp 1939-1941. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #130, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A.1<sup>st</sup> July 1941, TO 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1941. Commandant report on seamen evacuation orders 15 July 1941.

<sup>5</sup> Internment/POW camp daily logs from the Canadian National Archives are listed as Secret War Diary of... for the sake of clarity they will here forth be entitled Camp Daily Logs. They were called Secret War Camp Diaries due to the classified nature of the documents during the war as well as the fact that no duplicates could be made or in fact exist. Further endnotes in reference to daily logs will be as follows:

Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives. No## Internment Camp, (name) War Diary, dates: RG 24, Vols. 15,388-15,389. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp (name) ###, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. Dates. Event, Date.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Government of Canada Ibid., Kananaskis Internment Camp 1939-1941. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #130, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A.1<sup>st</sup> September 1941, TO 30th September, 1941 7 September 1941.

<sup>8</sup> Government of Canada Ibid., Kananaskis Internment Camp 1939-1941. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #130, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A.1<sup>st</sup> October 1941, TO 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1941 25 October 1941.

<sup>9</sup> Government of Canada Ibid., Kananaskis Internment Camp 1939-1941. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #130, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A.1<sup>st</sup> November 1941, TO 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1941, 1 November, 1941.

What nature of entertainment Davis witnessed was not stated.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 11 November 1941.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 22 November 1941.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 28 March 1942.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 3, 4 &11 April 1942.

<sup>14</sup> Government of Canada, Environment and Natural Resources, weather Climate and Hazard, Past weather and Climate, Historical Data, Banff National Park, Kananaskis Park, Exshaw Alberta (2 closest proximity to Seebe Alberta. Historical Weather data collected from September 1942 through May 1942. Kananaskis total precipitation of 336.8mm, Exshaw Alberta total precipitation 305mm.

<sup>15</sup> The reader must consider the amount of agency German POWs in camp had. Almost all camp programs including religion were, although supplied by the YMCA, prisoner organized and planned in accordance with the wishes of the camp elected leadership.

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<sup>16</sup>Government of Canada, Ibid. Kananaskis Internment Camp 1939-1941. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #130, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. Ibid., 9 May, 1942.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 16 May 1942.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 30 May 1942.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 7, 19, 25 July 1942.

<sup>20</sup> Hilton, J. and profile, V. (2019). *Seebe Dam Alberta ( Alberta Places )*. [online]

Gooddaybaddayasiseeit.blogspot.com. Available at: <http://gooddaybaddayasiseeit.blogspot.com/2012/02/seebe-dam-alberta-alberta-places.html> [Accessed 26 Feb. 2019].

<sup>21</sup> Government of Canada Ibid., Kananaskis Internment Camp 1939-1941. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #130, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> August 1942, TO 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1942, 20 August 1942.

The location of Seebe Camp rests 100 kilometers west of Calgary (the nearest large city) and travelling on unpaved roads making a visit was more than just a one-day event ,with travel time over rough road conditions factored into many challenges.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 5 September 1942.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 18 October 1942.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 3 January 1943.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 10 January 1943.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 12 April 1943.

<sup>27</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits Ozada/Kananaskis -1." (29 March 1942) Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits Ozada/Kananaskis -45." (29 March 1942) Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives

While one might think the mention of racquet balls means the sport as we know it today. It simply is not so, nor can it be determined with assurance to be the early form of the sport (paddle racquets) as this was invented in 1951 by handball player Joe Sobeck at the Greenwich, Connecticut YMCA.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>30</sup> Young Men's Christian Association (Calgary) fonds, Series 2, File M-1710-9. "Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of the Calgary YMCA. Held in the Renfrew Club on Friday, December 19, 1941. At 12:15PM." (19 December 1941) Glenbow Archives.

<sup>31</sup> Young Men's Christian Association (Calgary) fonds, Series 2, File M-1710-9. "Minutes of the Calgary YMCA Board of Directors Held in the Renfrew Club on Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1941. At 6:15PM." (21 November 1941) Glenbow Archives.

<sup>32</sup> "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits Ozada/Kananaskis -45." (29 March 1942) Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives

<sup>33</sup> Government of Canada Ibid., Kananaskis Internment Camp 1939-1941. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #130, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A. 1<sup>st</sup> 13 September & 14 September 1941.

<sup>34</sup> "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits Ozada/Kananaskis -Report File 4 pg 9." (2) Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> "German Pows Queue At The Kananaskis Internment Camp For The Head Count Conducted Each Evening. In The Background Is The Mess Hall. Like All Other Facilities, It Is Run Entirely By The Prisoners." 2019. *Ottawacitizen.Com*.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/German+PoWs+queue+Kananaskis+internment+camp+head+count+conducted+each+evening+background+mess+hall+Like+other+facilities+entirely+prisoners/8329937/story.html>.

<sup>38</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 1. "Report of first Month of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps," by Dr. Jerome Davis Report Dated 15 December 1940.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Official Report #11. "Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of November and December By Dr. Jerome Davis." Dated 2 January 1942.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Official report #16, "Report of the Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of August and September 1942 by. Dr. Jerome Davis," Dated 1 October 1942.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. Official Report #17, "Report of the Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of October and November 1942 by. Dr. Jerome Davis," Not Dated.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Official Report # 19 "Report of the Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of February and March 1942 by. Dr. Jerome Davis," Not Dated.

<sup>45</sup> Ghosttownpix.com. (2019). *Ribbon Creek2*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ghosttownpix.com/alberta/ribbon2.html> [Accessed 26 Feb. 2019].

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Government of Canada Ibid., Kananaskis Internment Camp 1939-1941. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #130, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A.1<sup>st</sup> April 1941, TO 31<sup>st</sup> April 1941, 12 April 1941.

<sup>49</sup> Photograph of Kananaskis/Seebe Camp, 1943-1946, Accession # 20181033, POW Horthy Hairerirle Photo Album Fonds, Galt Museum and Archives, Lethbridge Alberta, Canada.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes Diary 1942." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives. Personal Diary 1942. 30 May 1942.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 20 August 1942.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Michael O'hagan, 2019. "Camp 132 – Medicine Hat | Michael O'hagan". *Powsincanada.Wordpress.Com*. <https://powsincanada.wordpress.com/tag/camp-132-medicine-hat/>.

<sup>55</sup> Erin Hoar, 2019. "POW And Internment Camps In Alberta: WWII". *Retroactive*. <https://albertashistoricplaces.wordpress.com/2017/11/01/pow-and-internment-camps-in-alberta-wwii/>.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 21 October 1942.

<sup>57</sup> Government of Canada Ibid., Medicine Hat Internment Camp 1943. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #132, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A, Months of October-February, various diary entries of construction delays. Temps ranging from -32 centigrade to plus 8 in the month of January according to government of Canada Historical Weather Data.

<sup>58</sup> Government of Canada Ibid., Medicine Hat Internment Camp 1943. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #132, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A.1<sup>st</sup> February 1943, TO 31<sup>st</sup> February 1943, 11th February 1943.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 15. "Report on the Work In the Canadian Internment Camps for the months of June and July 1942, by Dr. Jerome Davis" Report Dated August 1942.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Official Report # 20. "Report on the Work In the Canadian Internment Camps for the months of April, May and June 1943, by Dr. Jerome Davis" and Hermann Boeschenstein, Report not dated.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> The Canadian government was in control of religious conditions in Canadian POW camps. While they were aided by the world student relief fund (led by Dr. Brown) and worked in close conjunction with the YMCA to provide camps with religious material, they were superseded in power by the World's Chaplaincy Commission in religious work in the camps. The Chaplaincy Commission had long held against the YMCA providing religious services in the POW camps unless the YMCA representative was an ordained reverend in a Protestant church. This was mainly do to the inability/heretical instance of an un-ordained representative offering the sacraments.

<sup>64</sup> "Ozada" 2019. *Ghosttownpix.Com*. <https://www.ghosttownpix.com/alberta/ozada.html>.

<sup>65</sup> POWs had met with the Geneva Convention and Red Cross representative (E.L. Maag) to complain, but were denied any accommodations as guards were suffering the same conditions.

<sup>66</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 15. "Report on the Work In the

Canadian Internment Camps for the months of June and July 1942, by Dr. Jerome Davis" Report Dated August 1942.

<sup>67</sup> "German Forces - German POW Camp, Alberta, Canada". 2019. *Ww2incolor.Com*.  
[http://www.ww2incolor.com/german/img001\\_006.html](http://www.ww2incolor.com/german/img001_006.html).

<sup>68</sup> Government of Canada Ibid., Kananaskis Internment Camp 1939-1941. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #133, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A.1<sup>st</sup> May 1942, TO 31<sup>st</sup> May 1942, 10 May 1942..

<sup>69</sup> The Canadian Veterans Guard consisted of First World War Veterans who wanted to serve but would not be cleared for active duty, WWII veterans released from serving overseas, and Canadian soldiers who enlisted after 1944.

<sup>70</sup> Government of Canada Ibid., Kananaskis Internment Camp 1939-1941. Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #133, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A.1<sup>st</sup> May 1942, TO 31<sup>st</sup> May 1942. 24 May 1942.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 30 May 1942.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #133, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A.1<sup>st</sup> June 1942, TO 30th June 1942, 28 June 1942.

Ibid., Secret War Diary of Internment Camp #133, The Canadian Provost Corps, C.A.A.1<sup>st</sup> July 1942, TO 31<sup>st</sup> July 1942, 1 July 1942.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 31 August 1942.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 19 October 1942.

<sup>75</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits Ozada/Lethbridge -45." (Summer 1942) Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives, 1 June 1942.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 8 August 1942

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 19 August 1942.

<sup>79</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives, No. 133 Internment Camp, Ozada and Lethbridge, YMCA reports on welfare matters 1943-1946: RG 24, reel c-5401, file HQS 7236-83-6-133, YMCA gifts and donations 1942: RG 24, vol. 6583, file 3-3-5. Letters typed and sent to Davis would be sent C/O of YMCA War Prisoner Aid Head Office Toronto. He or his staff would open the letters, Dr. Spiro would make a duplicate copy of requests and set about procuring the items. Davis would also accept a copy, and another copy was sent to YMCA War Prisoner Aid in America offices in New York. These letters sent from the camp were sent free of mail charges, as were all shipments of goods from the YMCA to the camps.

<sup>80</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits Ozada/Lethbridge -45." (Summer 1942) Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives, 31 August 1942.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 15 October 1942.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 18 October 1942.

<sup>83</sup> Government of Canada, Canadian National Archives, No. 133 Internment Camp, Ozada and Lethbridge, YMCA reports on welfare matters 1943-1946: RG 24, reel c-5401, file HQS 7236-83-6-133, YMCA gifts and donations 1942: RG 24, vol. 6583, file 3-3-5. 1512.

<sup>84</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits Ozada/Lethbridge -45." (Summer 1942) Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives, 19 October 1942.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Undated.

<sup>86</sup> A distinction must be made to ensure the reader recognizes that this report from Davis has made the distinction of what is North American Football, as opposed to European football, which Davis usually noted as soccer.

<sup>87</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits Ozada/Lethbridge -45." (Summer 1942) Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives, Undated, likely summer of 1942.

<sup>88</sup> Mary MacArthur, "Lake Bottoms Hold Secret to Palliser Triangle Mysteries." *The Western Producer*. December 08, 1994. Accessed April 11, 2019. <https://www.producer.com/1994/12/lake-bottoms-hold-secret-to-palliser-triangle-mysteries/>.

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"The Palliser Triangle is the driest region of the Canadian prairies stretching from southwestern Manitoba to southwestern Alberta and north to Saskatoon. It was described by Captain John Palliser in his Canadian exploration during the late 1800s as an area of land almost "uninhabitable" because of its arid conditions."

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Official Report # 17. "Report on the Work In the Canadian Internment Camps for the months of October and November 1942, by Dr. Jerome Davis." Report not dated.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Kilford, Lieutenant Colonel Christopher R. *On The Way!*, 112. Story recounted of four German POWs hidden in an underground room during closure of Camp Ozada. Day before move prisoner count indicated a problem, but RCMP and Camp guards unable to find missing prisoners. Move occurred and four guards remained till capture of four men. Recaptured on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 1942 as guards followed fresh footprints in snow to hidden room. "In all they spent 18 days, including a very cold Christmas underground."

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., Official Report # 18. "Report on the Work In the Canadian Internment Camps for the months of December 1942 and January 1943, by Dr. Jerome Davis."

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., Official Report # 19. "Report on the Work In the Canadian Internment Camps for the months of February and March 1943, by Dr. Jerome Davis."

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Galt Museum and Archives, "Horty Hairerirle" Fonds.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes Diary 1942." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives. Personal Diary 1942. 30 May 1942.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 18 August 1942.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 19 August 1942.

<sup>101</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 19. "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of February & March 1943."

## Chapter 5: Jerome Dwight Davis: Moral Revisionism

*“Their present chastened outlook is in striking contrast to their attitude two years ago when I started the work here”<sup>1</sup>*

During their confinement, sport became by far the most popular recreational activity that German POWs participated in at nearly all Canadian POW camps. Sport was encouraged by both the Canadian government and the YMCA War Prisoner Aid. The YMCA, however, accepted by far the largest burden in supplying and procuring sporting goods for POWs. The Canadian government, though sympathetic to the endeavour, had neither the resources nor the time to dedicate to POW sport initiative. While the Canadian government saw prisoner entertainment through sport as a preventative measure against escape attempts it was only too willing to allow the YMCA, a private organization, shoulder the burden of sport logistics. The YMCA and Jerome Davis came to play a major role in German POW life in Canada. The YMCA had built itself into a world-wide organization by working with young men in the mission field of Muscular Christianity through sport. The YMCA was no amateur in matters of sport, and by no means did it intend to turn German POWs into good Christian men, but Davis and other camp suppliers were intent on showing Christian charity to a group of men who were often suspicious of those who wanted to help them. Davis and other YMCA workers saw the need for entertainment inside POW camps and this led to their never wavering support of the men's sporting endeavours.

For better or for worse, Davis' official reports and YMCA War Prisoner Aid Committee for Canada Minutes in general appeared to be more concerned with the overall picture of the sporting life of POWs in all camps at any given time. Evidence of Davis' general feelings in



regard to the German POWs as a group within a much larger system will be presented within this chapter.

Davis' official reports pertaining to his visits to Canada's POW camps, as well as the minutes of the Committee for Canada of the War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations,<sup>2</sup> contains valuable evidence of the characteristics that Davis himself believed made a good YMCA POW Aid Director. They also contained his hopes for the future of the program. As early as 16 December 1940, Davis, in his second report relating to his work in the Canadian POW camps, wrote that "some of the camps need more space for...recreation, but I am hopeful that we can secure this as time goes by."<sup>3</sup> As early as Christmas 1940, then, Davis was concerned for the sporting welfare of internees in all internment camps, POW and civilian.<sup>4</sup>

It was not just Davis' reports to the Canadian Committee, but also his participation at the annual and (more often) bi-monthly meetings that energized Canadian participation in the YMCA War Prisoner Aid program. Davis was the originator and creator of the Canadian Committee. He personally selected men who could further his influence with the Canadian government. Davis, an American by birth, was appointed to his role in Canada by the International World Committee of YMCA's. One must emphasize, indeed remember, that Davis was paid by the World Alliance of YMCAs. Davis created the committee for three reasons: 1) for oversight, 2) for government influence/lobbying, and 3) for fundraising up until 1942, the year in which the Canadian government released new rules for canvassing funds.<sup>5</sup> The members Davis appointed to the Canadian Committee were well respected men near the pinnacle of their careers. These men wielded considerable national and provincial influence.<sup>6</sup> They included such individuals as The Honorable Sir William Mulock, P.C., K.C.M.G.,<sup>7</sup> Sir Ernest MacMillan LL.D. as Chairman, Mus. D.<sup>8</sup> John B. Frosst,<sup>9</sup> Edwin G. Baker,<sup>10</sup> E. James Bennett, F.C.A.,<sup>11</sup> Russell

G. Dingman,<sup>12</sup> Sir Robert Falconer, K.C.M.G., Henry R. Jackman, M.P.<sup>13</sup> Dr. W.C. Lockhart,<sup>14</sup> R.G. Riddell,<sup>15</sup> Norman A.M. MacKenzie,<sup>16</sup> Harry S. Southam, C.M.G.<sup>17</sup> Honorable Pierrepont Moffat,<sup>18</sup> Robert C. Mackie,<sup>19</sup> Mr. J. W. Beaton,<sup>20</sup> and Mr. R.S. Hosking.<sup>21</sup> It was at the “First Meeting of the Committee For Canada of the War Prisoners’ Aid of the Young Men’s Christian Associations,”<sup>22</sup> on 1 February 1941, that Davis told of the work in Canadian Camps and stressed the fact that “we must always remember that the work is reciprocal, that anything done for German prisoners here means that similar work can be done for the greater number of prisoners in Germany.”<sup>23</sup> Davis also related the educational, recreational, musical, and religious work “now being carried on in all the camps.”<sup>24</sup>

Prompted by a question about financing the work of the YMCA War Prisoner Aid, Davis also made sure that a very important mandate for the YMCA War Prisoner Aid in Canada was enunciated. He made it “clear that this committee is not raising funds in Canada for the German prisoners here.”<sup>25</sup> He did, however, report that the international YMCA was fundraising up to \$200,000 for all War Prisoner Aid programming world wide. The report continues to inform that Davis and Director Tracy Strong (International YMCA War Prisoner Aid) had just returned from a White House Tea in Washington hosted by Eleanor Roosevelt, Americas “First Lady.” There, they made a presentation on the YMCA War Prisoner Aid program and convinced Mrs. Roosevelt in fundraising.

Davis himself did not simply fundraise in Canada, but internationally as well, and as often as possible. One must remember that Davis, a YMCA worker, and American citizen, was employed by the World Committee of YMCAs in Geneva. Davis’ attitude towards what could be done to further POW life in Canada continued to occupy his mind. In his third official report submitted to the Canadian Committee, the International Committee (USA), and World

Committees of YMCAs, as well as Canadian Internment Operations in Ottawa dated 4 February 1941, Davis wrote: “we plan to have in each camp the following committees: 1. Educational 2. Library 3. Music 4. Athletics 5. Moving picture and theater 6. Relief, including toilet supplies, tobacco, etc. 7. Religion.”<sup>26</sup> He added that “The chairman of each of these committees, with the camp leader would make up the YMCA Committee in each camp. As seen in previous chapters, this came to pass in the Canadian POW camps. Whether or not the German POWs called themselves the YMCA committee or not is irrelevant. The fact is that they were aware that this committee structure would be the communication channel route to Davis and so be advantageous to the facilitation of their requests.

Davis continued his analysis of the camps by reporting that “we have supplied skates in all but two camps, and the men have built their own skating rinks. We have supplied hockey sticks, pucks and other necessities for hockey games. This has been tremendously appreciated by the prisoners. In addition we have furnished volleyballs, hand balls, Ping-pong for each camp, footballs, boxing gloves and games.”<sup>27</sup> Davis was always quick to relate as much generic information pertaining to general POW camp life and a camp’s physical environment as he could. His reports that recounted events at all POW camps were long, most times formatted to specific topics such as religion or cultural activities. As he himself stated:

I never go into a prison camp without recognizing the tremendous opportunity for service in meeting human needs and the tremendous amount of good that has already been done by the YMCA in the brief period they have been working and with somewhat limited supplies which they have been able to command...The dividends in human happiness and religious values in prisoner of war work...are unparalleled.<sup>28</sup>

Indeed, Davis was steadfastly proud of the work he facilitated for POWs through the YMCA. He constantly reminded the leadership that the dividends were more than worth the efforts put into

facilitating German POW requests. In fact, the religious message of doing such good deeds shines through Davis' messages to the YMCA board.

A month later, on 19 March 1941, Davis attended yet another Canadian Committee meeting. "Dr. Davis," reported the committee, spoke briefly on the war work in the camps, showing how the educational, recreational and religious work aided in the morale of the camps."<sup>29</sup> To state that, overall, morale in Canadian POW camps was high would be a gross overstatement. However, sport and faith have always been significant boosters of morale in situations of stress.<sup>30</sup> Davis recognized, perhaps even witnessed, the effect of educational, recreational, and religious activities helping to increase morale. Davis' following report to the committee on 1 April 1941, reporting on the reciprocal work in camps, related:

It is not always appreciated how much work for the prisoners in one country has its repercussions in others. For example, consider the skating rinks. One Canadian manufacturer out of the generosity of his heart, contributed two hundred pairs of skates. The result was that we aided in building skating rinks in almost every prison camp in Canada. Later the Canadian Government took pictures of these rinks and some of them were sent to Germany...has its repercussions internationally...may have actually done *more* to help British prisoners...than had he sent help directly.<sup>31</sup>

Davis never provided proof for doing "more" for British POWs, but his belief in reciprocal returns was an important part of Davis' character. In general an optimist (albeit slightly naive), he hoped, prayed, and avowed that what he could do for POWs in Canada would affect the treatment of POWs world-wide. Unfortunately, as history conveys, such hopes were to be disappointed. Optimism on this point, it would appear, seldom materialized.

Davis' sixth report to the committee continued the saga of his work with German POWs in Canada, noting that "during the winter the skating rinks were the scene of constant activity...with the advent of spring the skating is over and *we* are now busy installing tennis courts...provided boxing gloves, regular instruction in this art as well as competition bouts are

frequent.”<sup>32</sup> Davis’ use of the word “we” further demonstrated a character quality. He saw the YMCA workers as a part of the POW projects, further he equated the German POWs as team partners, encouraging others to view them as men, fathers, brothers, sons. Davis further reported that “the cost of our activities for the 6-month period was \$19,959.68,”<sup>33</sup> demonstrating the extent to which the YMCA, that early in the war (1941), had gone to supply the POW camps. Still, more aid was needed, especially as the war increased in intensity. Canadian Internment Operations were placed under the umbrella of the Department of Defence in 1942, shortly before the great mass of German POWs from the North Africa Campaigns arrived in Canada. Davis, once again, finished his report with a moral lesson to the committee, one to remember, as Christ commanded: “Inasmuch as ye did unto one of these...ye did it unto me.”<sup>34</sup>

The third Canadian Committee meeting that Davis next attended occurred on 6 June 1941. Again, he:

emphasized the importance of the Prisoner of war work, citing among other reasons [the following three]: 1. That it aided the Canadian Commandants in keeping up morale in the prison camps and made for contented prisoners who were thus causing less difficulty from every standpoint. 2. In the long run, this prisoner of war work [would] help in building a world of peace after the war. 3. [YMCA War Prisoner Aid] demonstrate[ed] the golden rule- Christianity in Action. <sup>35</sup>

There remains little doubt that Davis believed that the ramifications of working with the POWs were much greater than simply reciprocal treatment for Canadian POWs interned in Europe. In effect, he claimed his work could facilitate much more, peace.<sup>36</sup>

Davis once again met with the Canadian Committee two months later, on 30 August 1941, he informed the committee: “the financial situation of the work in Canada was restricted because of the freezing of funds in the United States.”<sup>37</sup> Davis had to wait two months for the funding to make its way from the International War Prisoner Aid Program through the United

States, and eventually to Canada.<sup>38</sup> Davis also told the committee that refugee camps were now under the leadership of Colonel R.S.W. Fordham,<sup>39</sup> and that all refugees were under a separate classification and in separate camps from POWs. Davis relayed the following: “A program of athletics for the average camp of 500 men had been drawn up which showed that the total cost of the equipment came to about \$1,300”<sup>40</sup> Whether this was monthly or yearly was not stipulated. As the Canadian camps were to become much larger in 1942, these numbers were soon irrelevant.

Davis’ next meeting with the Canadian War Prisoner Aid Committee, on 30 October 1941, conveyed a plethora of data. As the committee reported, Davis:

gave a general report on conditions in the prison camps, stating that we had been going through a period of re-organization. Colonel Stethem had resigned as director of internment operations and a new director was being appointed...Dr. Davis had been asked [by the Federal Government] to make a survey of conditions in the camps which was called a cultural inventor... sent with Dr. Davis’s monthly report.<sup>41</sup>

The most interesting fact in this report did not come from Davis, but from his colleague Dr. W.C. Lockhart, who reported that “he found the government authorities seemed to have the upmost confidence and appreciation for the work of the Director of the War Prisoner Aid work of Canada, Dr. Davis. He thought the Committee should be advised of this fact.”<sup>42</sup> Davis developed a positive political reputation within Canadian government circles and was believed by the nation’s political leadership to be the right man for the job at hand.

The minutes of the August Committee Meeting contained an appended letter drafted to Major General Browne, Commanding Officer of the Department of National Defence, written by the committee chairman. Dated 30 October, the message stated that: “In view of the fact that during the summer even German prisoners of war in a great many of the camps, were given splendid swimming facilities, we think it most unfortunate that similar privileges have not been

afforded to the refugees.”<sup>43</sup> This is important, as it informs that, while the Canadian YMCA Committee thought that all internees in Canada (military or civilian) ought to be afforded the same privileges, the Canadian Government, on the other hand appeared to be placing higher priority German military prisoners over civilians. This was an unfortunate situation that Davis and the Committee felt needed to be addressed.

Davis’ report from 2 January 1942 to the Canadian Committee contained a lengthy introduction. It was an obvious attempt to gain some relief from his ever-increasing volume of work by means of securing an assistant to be located at the Canadian YMCA’s Toronto Office. He rationalized his request with the following:

It is not always appreciated that the work in Canada is a sort of five-dimensional field of effort, any of which could take the full time of the Secretary,

- In the first place there is the matter of actual visitation of the German camps. If one travelled all the time he could do little more than cover the circuit before it was time to begin all over again. Then after each visit supplies and materials urgently needed by the men must be purchased and shipped. Some of these have to come from Germany, others from the United States and even in Canada, under war priorities it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure them. Frequently they are ordered by the secretary but two months later are in the camp...[there]
- In the fourth place there is a matter of raising money for the work. We cannot continue our world wide activity without generous support but to secure it demands time and effort. Personally I try to raise at least the equivalent of my salary, and if possible much more. Recently I saw Dorothy Thompson in New York who promised to help with a tea but it took considerable time to arrange the interview. Here again I could use all my effort on financial appeals.

All of these activities and others are being carried on by the Director and one secretary stenographer in Toronto...The result is that we often fall behind in our work and I have been working seven days a week for fourteen months with only four days vacation at Christmas. I cite all this because it is part of the picture of the actual life of a YMCA secretary working for prisoners of war.<sup>44</sup>

Davis' time and energies were approaching a compromising point. His fundamental responsibilities consisted of work for German POWs in Canada, work for refugee camps, work for Allied POWs in Germany, and liaison with authorities in both private and public sectors. Davis concluded his thoughts by stating:

This is moral and spiritual activity at its best. Every sincere believer in God can rest assured that this prisoner of war work is one of the most consecrated tasks ever attempted in our generation. America will be proud of the record when and if the story is fully told.<sup>45</sup>

As the war progressed Davis' reports to the Canadian Committee continued to promote his ideals of provisioning through Christian charity. In his twelfth report, rendered on 1 April 1942, he wrote that "consequently our efforts in any country should be to do everything for the prisoners in that country that we would want done to our best friends if they were prisoners in any other country. Actually, therefore, it makes little difference what country or what group of prisoners one is serving."<sup>46</sup> Such practices of "doing unto others as you would have them do unto you" has long been a Christian ideal. Davis endeavoured to epitomize this commandment and encouraged the members of the Canadian Committee to practice the credo as well. Inclosing, Davis also made the comment that: "since the United States declared war, the men in the German camps have been even more appreciative of what we are doing...than before."<sup>47</sup> As time passed German POWs became less assured that they could win the war; and, as well, they knew supplies and funds for YMCA Canadian camp programming were not coming from Canada, but rather from America and elsewhere. It might have been that German POWs grew increasingly concerned that International YMCAs would discontinue funding to the Canadian YMCA camp activities.



Davis' 15<sup>th</sup> report to the Canadian Committee closed with a passionate defense of YMCA War Prisoner Aid programs. Davis wrote: "I wish that every contributor to the work of the Y.M.C.A. could visit a prison camp. No one who has seen the transformation which occurs through the addition of cultural activities would ever question its value."<sup>48</sup> Was Davis ever criticized for his work or challenged by wary citizens who did not wish to aid their enemies? It is entirely possible. As such he needed to explain himself officially in a way that would validate his beliefs and energise the Canadian Committee in their work as well.

The Canadian Committee Meeting of 4 September 1942 further elucidated on the story of Davis and his work. The minutes relate that two years prior, Davis, alone, was responsible for all camps in Canada. By September 1942, however, he was assisted by three new workers to help him in his work: Dr. Dale Brown from Montreal, representative of The World Student Relief Fund, assisted on educational matters; Dr. Benjamin P. Spiro from New York (later YMCA War Prisoner Aid Director US) assisted on acquisition and shipment of supplies; Reverend Fritz Soderberg assisted on solving POW religious matters in camps that could not be serviced by the World Chaplaincy Association. The report continued: "in the old days, before the present addition to the staff Dr. Davis had not only to visit the camps in Canada, but to raise money in the United States."<sup>49</sup> Davis' diary recorded all travel conducted in the year 1942, noting that he had "travelled an average of 1258 miles a week all year, equal to 200 miles a night on week days, about 58 on Sundays."<sup>50</sup> This meant that Davis travelled a staggering some sixty-five thousand miles in one year

alone. Davis' YMCA War Prisoner Aid in Canada colleagues, reporting on the amount of work he did alone, acknowledged his dedication.

The effect of Davis' exorbitant amount of travel to assist POW athletics would have been partly nullified if he had been somehow denied access to the very POWs he served. Unfortunately, the researcher finds that at times it was an issue that plagued the early days of Davis' work in visiting POW camps. During the Committee's 4 September 1942 meeting, the committee drafted a letter to Colonel Streight (Director of internment operations) in which they wrote the following:

at present the permission reads that our secretary will be permitted to enter the recreation hut only...if no hut...interpreted to mean that the delegate was not permitted to enter the compound at all...[if] instructions[allowed for the secretary to be]permitted to visit the athletic field...[our] delegate may discuss freely with...leaders in ...athletics.<sup>51</sup>

Translated, this sheds light on why so many of Davis' meetings with POWs in Ontario occurred outside the main compound, therefore, were supervised. Most camp Commandants remained resolute on this point, enough so that Davis was not allowed into the interior of many POW camps. While not all Commandants restricted Davis' movements in the camps, it was much easier for Davis to speak to POWs and be present at their athletic events after the policy changes allowing secretaries to freely move around the camps were enacted. This, in turn, provided him with a clearer understanding on what athletic goods were required.

Jerome Davis' YMCA mission in Canada extended well beyond his athletics work with German prisoners of war. In fact his athletic agenda did not particularly stem from his own life as an athlete, but rather his life's work in Christian missions and duty to the YMCA and its organization credo. On 1 October 1942 Davis wrote in

Report #16 that: “While at this camp I had the sad duty of informing the camp leader of the death in Germany of his wife and all the children of one of the other prisoners.”<sup>52</sup> Aside from his duties for the YMCA, Davis often delivered messages to the POWs on behalf of Canadian authorities.

In November of 1942 Davis again emphasised the efforts that the YMCA had accomplished: “The work in the aggregate is tremendous but it is only as one sees what it means in individual cases and multiplies this by the hundred thousand that one appreciates the full meaning behind our program[s]...athletics [also].”<sup>53</sup> Davis wanted to communicate as many personal POW stories as possible so that the committees and others would better understand the work he was accomplishing with their help. However, official reports were not the venue for such expressions; therefore he wrote articles for popular magazines. Davis wanted the message of POWs and their struggles to be noted across the world.

Shortly before the New Year, on 17 December 1942, Davis appeared at a Canadian Committee meeting in Toronto rendering a full account of sports in POW camps.<sup>54</sup> He reported to the assembled body: “at the present time, in the field of athletics, each camp has volleyballs, basketballs, soccer balls, a skating rink, an athletic field, ping-pong tables, and gymnastic equipment. A recreation hut is usually available in every camp. Many of the camps have tennis courts.”<sup>55</sup> Davis believed that these goods and their steady use in sport programs made POW life in the camps much more pleasant.

By January of 1942 Davis had consolidated his plans to leave the YMCA. Feeling he had established a solid base of operations for POWs in Canada, he

requested of his superiors an assignment to render the same services to POWs interned in the United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) as he had preformed in Canada.

Difficulties arose in obtaining permission to be in the Soviet Union under its communist regime. His request was denied. Nevertheless, Davis went to the USSR in the role of a war correspondent. Before his departure to Russia, in his January 1943

Report #18, Davis wrote the following:

we have faith, too, that in building a permanent peace the bridging of international hatreds and the promotion of understanding even between those who were formally at war with each other will not have been in vain. Long after the passions and hatreds engendered by the war have been long forgotten humanity will remember the efforts of all those who helped to bring 'a cup of cold water' or a bit of cheer to the men behind barbed wire.<sup>56</sup>

The imagery of the "cup of cold water" referred to the gospel of Christ in the book of Matthew when Jesus said: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."<sup>57</sup> Davis believed that the reward the YMCA would receive for their War Prisoner Aid efforts would be beneficial in a multitude of ways, leading to a greater future of Christian discipleship.

At Davis' last meeting with the Canadian Committee before leaving the YMCA War Prisoner Aid Program, he reported that "there was difficulty in supplying articles to be paid for by prisoners, since the Canadian authorities thought that nearly everything should be given outright by the Y.M.C.A. due to the increasing scarcity of goods."<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately for Davis' successor, this problem would be difficult to solve. Although Davis understood the Canadian Government's perspective on an aid agency giving goods freely, a traditional method of charity, the government either did not

comprehend the budgeting that factored into the supplying of goods or simply did not consider the difficulty facing the aid agencies operating within the nation. Neither did the government appreciate the YMCA's inability to simply freely supply everything prisoners requested. The funds to do so were categorically not available.

In the summer of 1942 Jerome Davis published an article in the *Christian Century Journal*. Entitled "In Canadian Prison Camps,"<sup>59</sup> it conveyed the situation of POWs in Canada and the YMCAs War Prisoner Aid activities. The article was laced with homilies, such as "prisoners who are busy are likely to keep well," and "men do not live by bread alone in our modern world. They live by cultural activities which governments themselves do not provide."<sup>60</sup> Davis also stressed the message that he thought people needed to hear in reference to their enemies: "as they stood around the Christmas tree and sang 'Silent Night, Holy Night,' one could not but realize that the distance between men of every nation is perhaps less than we think."<sup>61</sup> Davis believed in the commonality of men worldwide and the hope of a better, more peaceful future among nations. Davis also wrote the following, a passionate avowal of his devotion to the work the YMCA: was doing: "Consequently, it is probably safe to say that a dollar contributed to prisoner-of-war work brings greater returns than one given to almost any other cause in the world."<sup>62</sup> Davis firmly believed that helping POWs would lead to a better world. He concluded his article: "this work is laying the foundation for building an enduring peace."<sup>63</sup> Davis continued to aspire to peace, a motif that embroidered Davis' work with German POWs in Canada.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Papers of Jerome Davis, Accession # 67-5, 67-19, MR 71-14 Photograph collections, and Mrs. Roosevelt's letters to Jerome Davis. Roosevelt Institute, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Archives. Letter dated 28 November 1942.

<sup>2</sup> Committee formed by Davis for the oversight of his work in Canadian internment camps. The committee was under the authority of the International YMCA (USA) as well as under the umbrella of the World Committee of Young Men's Christian Associations.

<sup>3</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 2. "Of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps by Dr. Jerome Davis." Davis report for Canadian Committee, 16 December 1940.

<sup>4</sup> Canada created and operated a total of 27 main internment camps during WWII, 12 in Ontario, 6 in Quebec, 1 in Manitoba, 2 in New Brunswick, and 6 in Alberta. Only 15 of them ever held German military POWs, or Enemy Merchant Seamen following their re-classification to combat personnel. Other internment camps across Canada held German Jewish refugees, Japanese-Canadians or those of Japanese descent, Italian Canadians considered pro fascist, Jewish-Canadians, and those with citizenship in enemy countries, as well as Mennonites for their pacifism, and refusal to serve in the military. Davis served all of these camps, along with his duties to the 15 POW camps.

<sup>5</sup> The Canadian Government in 1942 denied individual organizational fundraising. Therefore, the YMCA, Knights of Columbus, Red Cross, and Canadian women's chapter of the Institute of Education, were all charged to fundraise together. All funds raised would be given back to the organizations at the government's discretion. In 1942 the YMCA received from this fundraising the largest share of over one million dollars for the remainder of the war. (This was not enough however and soon "combined canvassing" again occurred throughout the remainder of the war.)

<sup>6</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014/001 (03) "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. WPA-Committee for Canada Meetings, Minutes 1941-1942.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Individuals are *appointed* to the Order. British Ambassadors to foreign nations are often appointed as KCMGs Knight Commander (KCMG) and afterwards they may use the title "Sir" before their name. It is the normal award for members of the FCO. The Order's motto is *Auspiciis melioris ævi* ("Token of a better age").<sup>[2]</sup> Its patron saints are Saint Michael the Archangel and Saint George. One of its primary symbols is that of St Michael standing over Satan.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Doctor of Laws, Doctor of Music.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Sir George Williams University Alumni.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., President, Moore Corp.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Financial Certified accountant George A. Touche & Co.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Fraser, Dingman & Co.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Member of Parliament

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Secretary of the University of Toronto Canadian Officers Training Corps, a position he held until 1946

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., His specialty was imperial history, which he taught at the University of Toronto from 1934 until 1942, after which he joined the External Affairs Department in Ottawa. He became head of the United Nations division in 1946.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., President, University of New Brunswick

<sup>17</sup> THE MOST DISTINGUISHED ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL and ST. GEORGE GCMG / KCMG / CMG, CMG (Companions), maximum 1,435 members and not more than 103 per annum. As with the Order of the Bath, the first two classes confer Knighthood. The third class does not confer knighthood. *The Ottawa Citizen*.

<sup>18</sup> Legation of the United States of America

<sup>19</sup> General Secretary World's Student Christian Federation

<sup>20</sup> Senior Secretary for War Services, National Council YMCA's of Canada

<sup>21</sup> General Secretary National Council of YMCA's Canada

<sup>22</sup> Davis, Accession # B84-0014/001 (03) "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. WPA-Committee for Canada Meetings, Minutes 1941-1942. 1 February, 1941.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 3. "Of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps by Dr. Jerome Davis." Davis report for Canadian Committee, 4 February, 1941. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>29</sup> Davis, Accession # B84-0014/001 (03) "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. WPA-Committee for Canada Meetings, Minutes 1941-1942. 1 February, 1941. "Minutes of the Second Meeting, Committee For Canada War Prisoners Aid of the Young Men's Christian Association, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1941." 1.

<sup>30</sup> Jan Bank with Lieve Gevers, translated by Brian Doyle, *Churches and religion in the Second World War* (London; Oxford, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 5. "Of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps by Dr. Jerome Davis." Davis report for Canadian Committee, 1 April 1941. 4. "Italics mine"

<sup>32</sup> Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 5. "Of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps by Dr. Jerome Davis." Davis report for Canadian Committee, May 1941. 8. "Italics mine".

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>35</sup> Davis, "Minutes of the third meeting – Committee for Canada War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Association." 6 June 1941.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Davis, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for Canada." 30 August 1941.

<sup>38</sup> Erica Fugger, "American Aid for German War Prisoners: Humanitarian Relief as Reconciliation between Heritage and Patriotism" (Masters Honors Thesis, Union College, 2012), 58-62. As cited by Fugger, Emil Auer to U.S. Department of State, September 4, 1941, File 1, American Aid, NARA. In June 1941, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8785 to halt the transfer of funds to foreign powers, hence, establishing a licensing program within the Treasury Department for organizations seeking to transfer funds to belligerent countries. Germany was included in this list. Based upon the stipulations of the Executive Order and an investigation by the President's Committee, the American chapter of the Kyffhäuser's League had its funds suspended by the federal government. Though they attempted to transfer the funds to the American Treasury to dispense to the American Red Cross and the American YMCA War Prisoner Aid, this did not happen until their funds were eventually unfrozen in October of 1941. However, the Kyffhäuser's League was still considered a "dangerous" organization accused of "aid[ing] German War Prisoners in Canada to escape to the U.S. and then to Mexico en route to Germany." 58-62.

<sup>39</sup> Davis, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for Canada." 30 August 1941.

Refugees in this context applied to all persons fleeing European Axis countries to Canada, most often Jewish refugees.

<sup>40</sup> Davis, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for Canada." August 30, 1941.

<sup>41</sup> Davis, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for Canada." 30 October 1941.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>44</sup> Davis, University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 11. "Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the months of November and December by Dr. Jerome Davis." 2 January, 1942.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 8. Davis' reference to American rather than North America in this statement reflects his American Nationalism, although his work was in Canada. Again, one must realize that although born in Japan, Davis was born to American parents and was an American citizen who was formally educated in America.

<sup>46</sup> Davis, Official Report # 12. "Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the months of February and March, 1942 by Dr. Jerome Davis." 1 April 1942. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>48</sup> Davis, Official Report # 15. "Report of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the months of June and July, 1942 by Dr. Jerome Davis." August 1942.

<sup>49</sup> Davis, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for Canada." 4 September 1942.

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<sup>50</sup>Jerome Davis. Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes Diary 1942." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives. Personal Diary 1942. 31 December 1942.

<sup>51</sup> Davis, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for Canada." 4 September 1942.

<sup>52</sup> Davis, Official Report # 16. "Report of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the months of August 1942 by Dr. Jerome Davis." 4 September 1942.

<sup>53</sup> Davis, Official Report # 17. "Report of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the months of September and October 1942 by Dr. Jerome Davis." November 1942.

<sup>54</sup> Davis, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for Canada." 17 December 1942.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Davis, Official Report # 18. "Report of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps During the months of November and December 1942 by Dr. Jerome Davis." January 1942.

<sup>57</sup> KJB, Matthew 10:42

<sup>58</sup> Davis, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for Canada." 10 May 1943.

<sup>59</sup> Jerome Davis, "In Canadian Prison Camps," *The Christian Century Journal* (19 August 1942): 1002-1004.

<sup>60</sup> Davis "In Canadian Prison Camps," Ibid., 1002.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 1003.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 1004.



## Chapter 6: Conclusion: “To Help These Men...”

*“The YMCA sent me to Czaristic Russia. ... I was in constant danger of my life; yet, strangely enough, I never enjoyed work more than helping these men who did not have enough to eat, to wear, or to do.”<sup>1</sup>*

In the House of Commons session Thursday, 20 June 1940, the Government of Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King voted to accept the responsibility of receiving and interning enemy aliens and WWII German Prisoners of War (POWs) previously incarcerated in Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> Canada, a Commonwealth ally to Britain, and signatory to the 1929 Geneva Convention, was compelled to abide by strict rules governing the treatment of newly arrived POWs from Britain.

The Geneva Convention called for mandatory leisure activity opportunities in POW life.<sup>3</sup> Having accepted the responsibility of interning German POWs in Canada,<sup>4</sup> the Canadian Government and the Canadian Red Cross soon realized that they were woefully unprepared or capable of facilitating vast amounts of supplies or organizational schemes for recreational programming.<sup>5</sup> Quick to aid the government in recreational and athletic endeavors for POWs, the World Alliance of Young Men’s Christian Associations War Prisoners Aid program stepped in to fill the void. It soon became the desire and responsibility of the YMCA War Prisoner Aid<sup>6</sup> of Canada and its Director Jerome Davis, to fulfill the duties of making prisoners lives more than simply comfortable, but to provide for POW’s recreational athletic endeavours.

The National YMCA of Canada was no stranger to military involvement by the Second World War. It participated in the Second Boer War by sending human and supply resources to South Africa in 1899.<sup>7</sup> The Canadian International YMCA sent secretaries/managers<sup>8</sup> to work with the Japanese military in Manchuria during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904.<sup>9</sup> And, Quebec

and Ontario Provincial YMCA committees worked in army camps as early as 1859.<sup>10</sup> By the time Canada entered the Second World War international and local Canadian YMCAs were ready, willing, and prepared to aid prisoners of war.

The North American War Prisoners Aid, under the auspice of the World Alliance of The Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCAs) attempted to solve the Canadian Government's difficulty of facilitating Geneva Convention recreational requirements by instituting a program in which the YMCA "provide[d] behind the barbed wire all the activities that usually belong[ed] to campus life, educational, musical, athletic, recreational and religious."<sup>11</sup> This "Campus Life" program, was a welcome distraction combatting boredom, loneliness and depression in young men. Since its inception in World War I, the YMCA War Prisoner Aid had the distinctive purpose of promoting the highest welfare of young men.<sup>12</sup> The success of Campus Life athletic programming resulted in athletic programming as the hallmark of YMCA-sponsored activities in POW camps. Athletic programming and sports equipment provided by the YMCA War Prisoner Aid established a wide array of benefits to POWs. Athletics relieved boredom and loneliness by fostering team play and comradery. Athletics also helped reduce pent-up male aggression and violence in a confined environment, and lastly, YMCA War Prisoner Aid-sponsored POW athletics helped POWs "recognize the spirit of Christian charity."<sup>13</sup>

The history of the YMCA War Prisoner Aid of Canada is not a complete account without communicating the life story of its primary leader Jerome Davis. Davis brought the YMCA War Prisoner Aid of Canada to the forefront of POW comforts and sport programming, particularly for German POWs in Canadian camps. While current histories exist portraying the story of German POWs in Canada from 1939 to 1943, authors such as Carter, Auger, Melady, Jones and Zimmerman,<sup>14</sup> affected at least a cursory examination of the sporting life of POWs. Beyond that,

few mentioned the man at the heart of the YMCA War Prisoner Aid: Jerome Dwight Davis. A focus on the head inspector of all North American POW camps was necessary for this dissertation. A deeper investigation into Davis' life was indeed essential to understand his development of "The Campus Life Program,"<sup>15</sup> specifically designed to ward off the dreaded "Barbed Wire Disease,"<sup>16</sup> a malady partly remedied through sport programming. The examination of Davis and his beliefs within chapter two and five, used direct personal reference materials relating to Davis and the work he accomplished for the International YMCA War Prisoner Aid Program.

Jerome Dwight Davis and his ancestry made clear his background preceding his WWI and WWII POW aid work and the profound impact that those experiences had on his beliefs towards helping those in need. Davis was not merely following the YMCA mandate of making men into Muscular Christians ready to serve Christ. His decision to take part in military affairs, although he never served in the armed forces, is a reflection of his respect for military duty. Having been raised by men who had been forged by a distinct heritage of military service helped Davis become a conscientious aid worker within military operational structures. Davis became a man who saw beyond simply the uniforms of POWs, men whose military service was dedicated to their nationalist cause. Similarly, he himself was dedicated to a cause: the aid and comfort of POWs in their hours of need.

Davis' reasoning for working to aid German POWs sport can be distilled to five main theologically-based ideas. (1) his mission: the goal of helping the least of God's people (in Davis' eyes the "least" were German POWs. (2) his solution: bringing about sporting provisions for the German POWs; (3) his belief: sport as a facilitator in character-building and acceptance of Christian charity and perhaps even salvation; (4) his success: thanks received from POWs

whom he aided; and lastly (5) his evaluation: submitted upon leaving the Directorship of Canadian YMCA War Prisoner Aid.<sup>17</sup> As he neared the end of his tenure with the Canadian YMCA War Prisoner Aid, Davis wrote multiple times of “doing unto others” as you would have done unto you,” one of the primary Christian ideals, and a direct command of Christ. He also wrote “I want to state the pleasure it has been to be able to bring some light to the life of the men behind the barbed wire.”<sup>18</sup> Davis epitomized Christian values and encouraged the members of the Canadian Committee and the North American public to do so as well.

As previously discussed, to research the YMCA War Prisoner Aid in Canada during the Second World War and not mention Jerome Davis and the work he did in Ontario and Alberta German POW camps is equivalent to discarding the history of one of Canada’s great humanitarian efforts. As Director of Canadian War Prisoner Aid operations in civilian and POW camps across the nation from 1939 through the summer of 1943, Davis not only created but developed a program that Canadian YMCA War Prisoner Aid followed through to the wars end. Davis’ “Campus Life Program” carried the belief that POWs deserved the same qualities of life that any college student at the time would receive. What became the largest facilitation of goods for Davis was athletics. While Davis made provision of sporting goods for POWs appear easy, if not always affordable, this dissertation attests that at times such ease was simply not so. However, Davis’ desire to provide athletic supplies and programming for German POWs to the extent he did, never stemmed from his own athletic history but rather his congregationalist upbringing and the religious teachings of Christ. Davis’ belief that Christian athletic charity could persuade hard line Nazis to throw away their mistrust of any aid organizations may or may not have occurred, nor did his grandiose desire for a new peaceful world order. However, this does not diminish the accomplishments of Davis’ mission.

Davis' dedication extended to travelling over 1,200 miles a year,<sup>19</sup> an average of 200 miles per day, six days a week, during which he distributed what can be approximated at \$16,750 American dollars a year on the camps discussed in this dissertation alone. In present American currency, accounting for inflation, this number expands to \$298,450 in the year 1941 alone. Davis' efforts in providing enormous quantities of athletic funding and hard goods to German POWs in Canada was the complete dedication of his war time life. Beyond the mandates of the Geneva Convention and the YMCA War Prisoner Aid program, Davis created an athletic POW program that not only deserves recognition, but far more scholarly attention. This dissertation is one endeavour to do so.

However, despite all the evidence above, in order to understand Davis and his unwavering mission and purpose as Director of YMCA War Prisoner Aid to German prisoners of war in Canada, it ought to be viewed through three specific elements of Davis' character. His idealism, his frustrations, and his commitment to cause.

Davis was a man of steadfast Christian Idealism, derived from his upbringing, his formal educational training, and his basic human character. Davis' contribution to German POW athletic aid was much more than his simple acceptance of requests and facilitation of them. It was Davis' congregationalist upbringing rooted in scripture and the commands of Christ that encouraged him to see German POWs as men like himself rather than as a hated enemy. Davis was raised by missionary parents who believed in education as a tool for the advancement of Christianity, something the YMCA considered a mandate. His seminary training, sociology doctorate, and subsequent mission-work on a medical ship to Newfoundland and Labrador, in turn developed Davis as a dedicated Christian of the war-time era. He was a Christian who saw suffering and made it his mission to aid in putting an end to it. Through the World Committee of YMCAs and

the International YMCA offices in New York directed by Tracy Strong, Davis was assigned to Canada, and through the support structure of the YMCA earned mission success with German POWs through a program in which athletics played a pivotal role.

Davis believed that through the supply of sport equipment and programming to German POWs he could help end or persuade hard-line Nazis to end their mistrust in religion and facilitate a new peaceful world future. Davis never failed to see the best in any situation he faced as Director of Canadian YMCA war prisoner aid. He was a perpetual optimist. This is indicative of traditional religious training and the ideal that the imitation of Christ is the duty of those who believe and are blessed with the Holy Spirit to do Christ's work on earth. Davis' Christian character is a direct reflection of his personal commitment to Christ-like principles, reflected consistently, and solidly within his mission.

Davis was meticulous in his organization of YMCA aid to German POWs. His written classifications of his duties in various reports to the Canadian Committee and the archival evidence of his diary and hand-written notes, reflect the character of the man himself. Davis did not solely concern himself with the duty of ensuring that Geneva Convention mandates and sport requests were being met, but rather concerned himself with so much more. While Davis believed athletic programming had the ability to prevent boredom and encourage healthful athletic benefits, it was not all he believed the YMCA War Prisoner Aid could do for them. As established previously Davis even conveyed messages for the Government to those hurting from the loss of loved ones. Davis not only met his expected duties as Director of YMCA War Prisoner Aid in Canada, he far exceeded them.

For all of Davis' success with War Prisoner Aid in Canada, he also experienced his fair share of frustrations, for example, his denied requests to Russian authorities relevant to his work

in German POW camps in the USSR,<sup>20</sup> and from the Canadian Government's misunderstanding of the position of the YMCA and their limited financial purchasing power.<sup>21</sup> Despite his frustrations it is important to note that Davis was an eternal optimist, for as he said "some of the camps need more space for...recreation, but I am hopeful that we can secure this as time goes by."<sup>22</sup>

Davis also held great optimism concerning the ideal of reciprocal work. Reciprocal returns were an important part his work. In general an optimist, he hoped, prayed, and steadfastly believed that what he could do for POWs in Canada would affect the treatment of POWs world-wide. Unfortunately, as history conveys, such hopes were not realized as Davis had sometimes guilelessly desired. However, this in no way diminished his optimism into the future of YMCA War Prisoner Aid.

Davis' professionalism is yet another character trait that exhibits the success placed within his design and delivery of both his campus life program and his endeavours with POW athletics. Davis possessed an ability to easily communicate with everyone he encountered, POWs or politicians. His ability to influence community leaders to join both the Canadian Committee for War Prisoner Aid, and his communications with Eleanor Roosevelt resulting in a White House Tea to fundraise for War Prisoner Aid, demonstrates not only his practical fundraising acumen but his ability to demonstrate the importance of YMCA War Prisoner Aid and the need of POWs in Canada.

An article written by Eleanor Roosevelt on 19 February 1942 entitled "My Day" recounts Davis' visit to dinner at the White House and the message he conveyed: "We had an interesting dinner here last night at which Dr. Jerome Davis...spoke for the YMCA work among prisoners of war the world over... everyone must have gone away inspired by the realization of the work

being done, even though it may not cover the whole range of need.”<sup>23</sup> By the conclusion of 1942, Davis, for all his success continued to communicate that much additional work needed to be done. Mrs. Roosevelt continued: “Anything we can do for our enemy prisoners seems to me to justify itself. We have a double incentive when our permission to help Allied prisoners of war depends upon the work done with the enemy prisoners.”<sup>24</sup> Davis had managed to convey his message to the most influential woman in America at the time.

Davis’ communications with Mrs. Roosevelt was two-fold: 1) he conveyed the need for funding for YMCA War Prisoner Aid to a broader audience, and 2) he hoped to gain favour with those who could eventually aid in his mission to work with war prisoners in Russia. As he wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt in a letter dated 13 June 1941:

I am still hoping against hope that Russia may be forced to break with Germany. In the event of active warfare between Germany and Russia, I might be sent by the World’s Committee of the Young Men’s Christian association to work among the prisoners of war in Russia, although I should hope that eventually the United States Government itself might be able to use my services in Russia, since I speak the language. I fear, however, Russia may continue her past tactics.<sup>25</sup>

It is in this letter that Davis conveyed the importance of the work he was achieving in Canada, as well as his intense desire to return to where he began; his work with POWs in WWI Russia.

Davis’ viewpoint within his mission was never solely focused on German POWs interned in Canada; rather he was internationally minded in scope when it came to concerns of POWs. His attitude towards the needs of POWs was prompted by both religion and worldliness, and by no coincidence in direct line with the world scope of the YMCA. An international traveller and aid worker, Davis never forgot his experiences in WWI Russia YMCA work; his desire to return characterized his international mindset of aiding those in need. A glimpse into Davis’ past



revealed his zeal for YMCA Prisoner of War aid in North America, and, as well, his Congregationalist resolve towards POWs and YMCA ecumenicalism. In Davis' case, his evangelical enlightenment facilitated his seamless transition into the ecumenical context of the World Alliance of YMCA War Prisoner Aid.<sup>26</sup>

As conveyed in Chapter 2, the YMCA has consistently practiced ecumenical minimalism; convictions determined by the social situation rather than by pure faith in revelation.<sup>27</sup> Davis believed that "when an establishment cannot morally justify certain practices, it must either change its morality or change the practice- a sort of moral revisionism"<sup>28</sup> For Davis the disparagement of German POWs was not only wrong, but short-sighted. His firm views on the provision of basic comforts as well as sport programming for POWs came directly from the YMCAs non-doctrinal, non-ecclesiastical and non-political character, and Davis' Congregational belief in scripture above doctrine and ecumenical minimalism.

To understand Davis and the athletic programming of the Canadian YMCA War Prisoner Aid is to understand Davis' personality in a greater context. Traditionally educated, yet innovative in his POW aid programming, he mounted a persistent quest to provide sport pleasures for German POWs. Davis is a classic case of nature over nurture, his basic human nature made him the YMCA Director he was, as well as made him a faithful Christian servant to German POWs.

Bare statistics conveyed within this dissertation tell merely half the story of Davis. The amount of goods he delivered showed his energy, vigor, and commitment to cause, but in no way communicates a deeper understanding as to why the Canadian YMCA War Prisoner Aid program was such a success. The answer lies within the organization itself and the man at the helm from 1939-1943. Jerome Davis, his superiors at International YMCA War Prisoner Aid and

his successor Hermann Boeschenstein, carried the YMCA War Prisoner Aid, mission into an ever more unsettling world, proving the Christian ethos of “doing unto others,” and “loving thy neighbour.”

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Jerome Davis. 1950. "This I Believe « Jerome Davis | This I Believe". *Thisibelieve.Org*.

<https://thisibelieve.org/essay/16482/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Canada Prepared [to] Take Internees: Also German Prisoners-of-War Now in Britain Says King," *Lethbridge Herald*. (20 June 1940,) 10. Accessed January 13, 2017.  
<http://access.newspaperarchive.com.ezproxy.assembly.ab.ca/ca/alberta/lethbridge/lethbridge-herald/1940/06-20/>

<sup>3</sup> "Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Geneva, 27 July 1929." International Committee of the Red Cross, <https://www.icrc.org/en/copyright-and-terms-use>  
Sec 2 Chapter 3 Article 17. And Chapter 3 Section 5 Article 56

<sup>4</sup> David J. Carter, *Behind Canadian Barbed Wire: Alien, Refugee and Prisoner of War Camps in Canada 1914-1946* (Calgary: Tumbleweed Press Ltd, 1980).

Canada interned Italian civilian internees, as well as Italian merchant seamen. However, the overwhelming majority of Canadian-held POWs were from the German military.

<sup>5</sup> John Joseph Kelly, "Der Deutsche Kriegsgefangener auf Alberta: Alberta and the Keeping of German Prisoners of War, 1939-1947. In *For King and Country: Alberta in the Second World War*, Ken Tingley ed. (Edmonton: Reidmore Books Inc, 1995), 293.

<sup>6</sup> Canadian YMCAs retained adherence to the Paris Statement of 1855 in which all YMCAs agreed to hold no outward political affiliations or to take sides in any political decisions or debate. This was not the case with American YMCAs however, with a passing of their own statements that allowed political affiliation and caused major inter conflict for the YMCAs of America with the outbreak of the Civil War.

<sup>7</sup> Murray G. Ross, *The YMCA in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1951), 260.

<sup>8</sup> Secretaries for the YMCA and its operations in no way refer to the definition of "secretary" in today's terms. A secretary in the YMCA was a director of a specific division of YMCA activities. For instance, each YMCA would have a secretary/instructor of sports programs, a secretary for religious programming, and so on. Each YMCA would also have a General Secretary who presided over the other Secretaries. This structured leadership was used in the world alliance as well where there were General Secretaries for each division of works, and a General Secretary of the world's committee, and lastly the president of the organization as a world-wide whole.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *World Service: A History of Foreign Work and World Service of Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and Canada* (New York: Association Press, 1957), 191.

Jon Thares Davisann, *A World of Crisis and Progress: The American YMCA in Japan, 1890-1930* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press: 1998), 100.

<sup>10</sup> Hopkins, 412.

<sup>11</sup> Jerome Davis, "Millions Behind Barbed Wire." *Survey Graphic* (August 1942): 347. Accessed October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.  
Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes on J.D's Visits -13." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>14</sup> Carter, *Behind Canadian Barbed Wire*.

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<sup>15</sup> Davis, "Millions Behind Barbed Wire," *Survey Graphic*, August (1942,) 345-347.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Van DER Ven, 437.

<sup>18</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 19. "Report of the Work in the Canadian Internment Camps During the Months of February & March 1943."

<sup>19</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # AX 022, Box 6 YMCA War Prisoner Aid 1941-1944, Folder Canadian Internment Camps. "Personal Notes Diary 1942." Jerome Davis papers, University of Oregon, Special Collections and University Archives. Personal Diary 1942. 31 December 1942.

<sup>20</sup> Papers of Jerome Davis, Accession # 67-5, 67-19, MR 71-14 Photograph collections, and Eleanor Roosevelt's letters to Jerome Davis. Roosevelt Institute, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Archives. Letter dated 29 September 1941.

<sup>21</sup> Davis, "Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for Canada." 10 May 1943.

<sup>22</sup> Jerome Davis, Accession # B84-0014, Box 1 Folders 1- 18, "Series I: War Prisoners' Aid of the Young Men's Christian Associations (Canadian Office)". University of Toronto Archives. Official Report # 2. "Of Work In the Canadian Internment Camps by Dr. Jerome Davis." Davis report for Canadian Committee, 16 December 1940.

<sup>23</sup> Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day, February 19, 1942," *The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Digital Edition* (2008), accessed 4/4/2017, [https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?\\_y=1942&\\_f=md056112](https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1942&_f=md056112).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Papers of Jerome Davis, Accession # 67-5, 67-19, MR 71-14 Photograph collections, and Mrs. Roosevelt's letters to Jerome Davis. Roosevelt Institute, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Archives. Letter dated 13 June 1941.

<sup>26</sup> Fretheim Kjetil. "Whose Kingdom? Which Context? Ecumenical and Contextual Theology in the Worlds Alliance of YMCAs," *International Review of Mission* 97:384-5 April 2008: 119.

<sup>27</sup> Benjamin S. Wall, "The Culture of Sport, Bodies of Desire, and the Body of Christ," *Journal of Disability and Religion* vol, 21 no.2 (2017): 142-151.

<sup>28</sup> Overman, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Sport*.

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## Courtney van Waas

- ✓ Internationally experienced professional with academic training in History, Sport History and Kinesiology with practical experience in; Sport History, POW Sport, Religion and Sport, YMCA Production and Participatory Sport, Masculinity Portrayal through Sport and Sociology of Sport.
- ✓ Teaching experience at University of Windsor and Western University for multidisciplinary topics, including Sport in Literature, Sport Ethics, Research Design and Human Movement Science, Psychology of Human Movement Science, as well as Exercise Sport, and The Body in Western Culture.
- ✓ Self-motivated and results orientated with ability to multitask efficiently while under pressure in situations of grade returns and course work preparation
- ✓ Skilled in working with a diverse range of scholars, including men and women Sport History Professionals; Various administration teams, labour crews, and fellow academics.
- ✓ Proficient in writing, technical reports, budgets, and in delivering lectures, workshops and presentations in the context of Sport and Religious Sport History.

### EDUCATION

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#### **PhD Candidate in Kinesiology**

**External Defence Nov 2019**

*School of Kinesiology, Sociocultural Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Canada*

- Specialization: German Prisoners of War in Canada; POW sporting experience through YMCA Assistance; YMCA Sport Programming; Religious and Benevolence Organisational Methods. Supervisor Dr. R.K. Barney

#### **Western Certificate in University Teaching and Learning**

**September 2013-April 2019**

Western Centre for Teaching and Learning

- Specialization: University Teaching course training list available upon request

#### **Masters of Kinesiology Sport History**

**September 2013- May 2015**

*School of Kinesiology, Sport History, University of Western Ontario, London, Canada*

- Thesis: Muscular Christian Edmonton: The Story of the Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association 1898-1920. Supervisor Dr. Kevin B. Wamsley

#### **Bachelor of Arts History with Distinction**

**September 2010- May 2013**

\* Denotes Authorship of Davis Reports within the Hermann Boeschenstein Fonds

*Department of History, Minor Specialization in Museum Studies, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada*

- Specialization: Thesis: Various Muscular Christianity topical papers

**Fashion Design and Industrial Production Diploma  
2009**

**September 2009- August**

*Department of Fashion Design and Apparel Production, Marvel College, Edmonton, Canada*

- Specialization: Female Business Wear Design and Production

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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**Instructor for Historical Perspectives of Physical Activity and Sport in Western Culture Fall  
2018**

*Department of Kinesiology, University of Windsor Ontario*

- Presented all topical lectures, on a twice weekly basis, for all topics, covering Sport Development and Dissemination throughout Western Culture
- Discussed topics in Religion and Western Sport Culture, as well as my own research on Muscular Christianity and the development of sport in England and North America, which resulted in a more complex yet in depth understanding of sport in the Victorian era, and sport in North America today.
- Assigned Group Work, Reviewed and Graded final exams and midterms, group essays, bi-weekly quizzes, and provided feedback to any other work upon student requests.
- Attended to students' learning and writing needs or concerns during office hours, which helped them sharpen their research arguments, critical thinking, and preparation for assignments (group essays) and exams.

**Teaching Assistant for Exercise, Sport, and the Body in Western Culture  
2018/19**

**Winter**

*Department of Kinesiology, Western, London, Canada*

- Facilitated hour-long tutorial sessions, on a weekly basis, for assignment review and exam preparation related to topics, including Sport Development and Dissemination throughout Western Culture, which resulted in more group discussion and grade improvement of those in attendance.
- Acted as guest lecturer and discussed topics in Religion and Western Sport Culture, as well as my own research on Muscular Christianity and the development of sport in England and North America, which resulted in a more complex yet in depth understanding of sport and the Victorian era.

\* Denotes Authorship of Davis Reports within the Hermann Boeschenstein Fonds

- Reviewed and Graded final exams and midterms (providing feedback), at weekly tutorial sessions resulting in understanding of test format and expectations.
- Attended to students' learning and writing needs, during office hours, which helped them sharpen their research arguments, critical thinking, and preparation for assignments (journal Article Reviews) and exams.

### **Teaching Assistant for Psychology of Human Movement Science**

**Fall 2017**

*Department of Kinesiology, Western, London, Canada*

- Marked monthly opinion pieces and article research two-page assignments, providing detailed feedback on basic writing skills and strength of argument resulting in improved writing and communicative writing of students.
- Attended to students' learning and writing needs, during office hours, which helped them sharpen their research arguments, critical thinking, and preparation for monthly assignments.
- Proctoring and grading of midterm and final exams.

### **Teaching Assistant for Research Design in Human Movement Science 2017**

**Winter**

*Department of Kinesiology, Western, London, Canada*

- Teaching and instruction of four by- weekly labs, and grading of lab reports as well as online forum reports providing detailed feedback on basic writing skills in a scientific paper and proper research statements and designs of experiments, resulting in grade improvement over the semester.
- Teaching review sessions for lab review and preparation for the upcoming assignments.
- Attended to students' learning and lab confusion and answers through email, during office hours, which helped students sharpen their understanding of research design, where they fell short, and what was expected of them within their submitted assignments.
- Grading and grade online submission of all midterms and final exams, ensuring after midterm that students understood the correct format (student name and number filled completely) for submitting exam scantron papers, which resulted in better student performance and saved time in grade submission in online system.

### **Teaching Assistant for Sport in Literature**

**Fall 2016**

*Department of Kinesiology, Western, London, Canada*

- All online announcements and grading submissions of midterm and final exam and essay assignment for student access within a timely manner.
- Guest Lecturer on special topics of Religion and Sport Masculinity, masculine Performance within Western Canadian Literature, and societal ramifications of regional expression in Sport.
- Proctoring of midterm and final exam

\* Denotes Authorship of Davis Reports within the Hermann Boeschenstein Fonds



### **Teaching Assistant for Research Design in Human Movement Science 2015**

**Winter**

*Department of Kinesiology, Western, London, Canada*

- Teaching and instruction of 6 by- weekly labs, and grading of lab reports as well as online monthly forum reports providing detailed feedback on basic writing skills in a scientific paper and proper research statements and designs of experiments, resulting in student improvement.
- Teaching review sessions for lab review and preparation for the upcoming assignments
- Attended to students' learning and lab confusion and answers through email, during office hours, which helped students sharpen their understanding of research design, where they fell short, and what was expected of them within their answers.
- Proctor duties of both Midterm and Final exam, answering any questions and confusion as needed.

### **Teaching Assistant for Research Design in Human Movement Science 2014**

**Winter**

*Department of Kinesiology, Western, London, Canada*

- Teaching and instruction of 6 by- weekly labs, and grading of lab reports as well as online monthly forum reports providing detailed feedback on basic writing skills in a scientific paper and proper research statements and designs of experiments.
- Teaching review sessions for lab review and preparation for the upcoming assignments
- Attended to students' learning and lab confusion and answers through email, during office hours, which helped students sharpen their understanding of research design, where they fell short, and what was expected of them within their answers.
- Proctor duties of both Midterm and Final exam, answering any questions and confusion as needed.

### **Teaching Assistant for Special Topics in Kinesiology: Ethics**

**Fall 2013**

*Department of Kinesiology, Western, London, Canada*

- All online announcements and grading submissions of midterm by-weekly reports and final exam for student access within a timely manner.
- Guest Lecturer on tutorial in topics of Advertising and Ethics, using multiple media sources to further student understanding.
- Proctoring of midterm and final exam.
- Grading of by-weekly reports, midterm and final exams providing detailed feedback on basic writing skills, grammar and essay structure, to help students understand the basics of writing in a non-scientific manner, as well as strengthening of an argument through proper selection of resources.

\* Denotes Authorship of Davis Reports within the Hermann Boeschenstein Fonds

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE (SPORT HISTORY)

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**Jerome Davis and YMCA War Prisoner Aid: POW Sport in WWII Canada** **September 2016-Present**

(Working Title Doctoral Dissertation)

*Department of Kinesiology, Western, London, Canada*

- Conducted research on finding lists of various institutions and archives
- Evidence used thus far for prospectus taken from University of Minnesota digital archives as well as various newspaper sources and YMCA publications
- Finding lists for each archive is organized and a list of files to pull are written up and printed for archive staff and for quick access once at archives
- Other archives with lists to access include, the University of Toronto, the University of Oregon, the Medicine Hat Archives, the Roosevelt Institute, the Canadian National Archives, the Kautz Family Archives at the University of Minnesota.

**Research Assistant**

**Present**

- Western University, London, Canada
- Responsible for research assigned Michael R. Wagenman on "A Theological Analysis of Psychedelic Rock"
- Analysis of joy of bassist Guy Pratt during concert taping of "David Gilmour: Live at Pompeii" (2017)

**Muscular Christian Edmonton:**  
**2015**

**September 2013- May**

**The Story of the Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association 1898-1920.**

(Master's Thesis)

*Department of Kinesiology, Western, London, Canada*

Supervisor Dr. Kevin B. Wamsley

- Conducted research on finding lists of the Provincial Archives of Alberta
- One box of Data on the Edmonton YMCA starting 1898 ending approximately 1970's
- All files read, and min book deeply read and analysed, notes taken, and meetings mins copied verbatim. Meaning behind mins notes and what occurred analysed, and suppositions made in congruence with other histories of the city of Edmonton at the time discussed.
- Research into main figures, and representatives of the board of directors conducted, as well as research into all correspondence collected by the board of directors concerning involvement in the first world war, and campaign drives for War Prisoner Aid.
- Time spent at archive two weeks.

\* Denotes Authorship of Davis Reports within the Hermann Boeschenstein Fonds

**Masters Research Assistant for Supervising Professor****Fall 2013***Department of Kinesiology, Western, London, Canada*

- Responsible for research assigned by supervisor when requested
- Supervisor Dr. Kevin B. Wamsley

**PUBLICATIONS**

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Ross, MacIntosh, **Courtney Van Waas**, and Thomas Fabian, "Her Enemies Were Thoroughly Wrecked": Women and Pugilism in Antebellum America," in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. [Accepted-Forthcoming]

Ross, MacIntosh, Thomas Fabian, and **Courtney Van Waas**, "Cultural Reproduction and Resistance at the Rinks: Roller Skating and the Americanization of California, 1867-1890," *Journal of Sport History* (2019)

**van Waas, Courtney**. "Connor's Man: Piloting Salvation in Pre-Provincial Alberta." *Alberta History*, Vol66 Issue 1 (January 2018)

**Refereed Publications**

**van Waas, Courtney**. (2018). Article Review, *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies*. Vol 27. 97-98.

Edelman, Robert Simon. "The Russians Are Not Coming! The Soviet Withdrawal from the Games of the XXIII Olympiad." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, No.1 (2015): 9-36.

**van Waas, Courtney**. (2017). Article Review, *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies*. Vol 26. 109-110.

Grix, Jonathan and Nina Kramareva "The Sochi Winter Olympics and Russia's unique soft power strategy." *Sport in Society*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2017): 461-475.

**van Waas, Courtney**. (2016). Article Review, *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies*. Vol 25. 127.

Mark Dyreson. "Global Television and the Transformation of the Olympics: The 1984 Los Angeles Games." *The international Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol 32, no.1 (2015): 172-184. – Reviewed by Courtney van Waas

**Thesis (non-refereed)**

van Waas, Courtney. (2015). Thesis: Muscular Christian Edmonton: The Story of the Edmonton Young Men's Christian Association 1898-1920. Masters of Kinesiology Sport History thesis, Western University

**PROFESSIONAL REPORTS/CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

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**"Your uniform is your membership card.":** **May 2018**

**The YMCA and War-time physical education programming"**

North American Society of Sport History Conference, University of Manitoba (Canada)

***Barbed Wire Requests: YMCA War Prisoner Sport in WWII Alberta*** **May 2017**

North American Society of Sport History Conference, California State University Fullerton (USA)

**Sheepskin or Pigskin?** **May 2015**

**The Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Issue of Sabbath Sports**

North American Society of Sport History Conference, University of Miami (USA)

**The Kuyperian Shift:** **Jan 2015**

**The Changing Calvinist View of Sunday Sport Participation 1945-2015**

Mackintosh Conference, Queens University Kingston (Canada)

**AWARDS/ACADEMIC PREFORMANCE**

---

Western Certificate in University Teaching and Learning 2015-2019

Recipient of Full PhD Funding Package University of Western Ontario (\$20,000/yr) 2016-present

Recipient of Full Masters Funding Package University of Western Ontario (\$10,000/yr) 2013-2015

G.E. Bussieres Scholarship (\$1,000) Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo  
80% Average required and essay submission 2011

G.E. Bussieres Scholarship (\$1,000) Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo  
80% Average required and essay submission 2006

Jason Lang Scholarship (\$1,000) Eastglen High School

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80% high School average required 2005-2008

Alexander Rutherford Scholarship (\$1,200) Province of Alberta  
80% High School average required grades 10-12 2003-2005

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**Cemeteries Operations- Seasonal labourer,** Summer 2018  
City of Edmonton, Alberta

- Knowledgeable in customer service
- Tractor, Skid-Steer skills
- Mowing, weeding, planting, mulching, plant maintenance
- Proficient in operating machinery
- Horticultural Inspection and repairs and planning
- Turf maintenance

**Operational Facilities- Parks Worker- Seasonal,** Summer 2013-2016  
Town of Cochrane Alberta

- Knowledgeable in customer service
- Trails Crew
- Tractor, Skid-Steer skills
- Mowing, weeding, planting, mulching, plant maintenance
- Proficient in operating machinery, and playground repairs
- Retaining wall construction and repair
- Playground inspection and repairs
- Turf/Park maintenance

**Summer Student, Parks Department** Summer 2010- 2012

*Litter Crew, Water Parks Crew, Trails Crew*

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo,

- Variety of maintenance duties (indoor/outdoor)
- General labour and grounds keeping, and general disposal cleanup
- Operation of crew trucks, tool cat, and gator
- Organization and running of children's scavenger hunts (Park Patrol Unit)

## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

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- **PSAC Representative (Union Rep for Graduate Students)**
- Fall 2017-Present
  - Liaison for kinesiology students to union representation board.

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- Dissemination of bargaining materials and information to all Kinesiology students, represent Kinesiology graduate student concerns to union board.
- Organization of assuring graduate student presence at strike vote stations.
- **Member of CHAPS (Cochrane Historical Archive and Preservation Society)**
- Summer 1016- Present
  - Member offering museum regulations and policy help when questioned
  - Represent information pertinent to government regulation
  - Recommendations to gain younger membership and encourage youth involvement.
- **Museum Heritage Exhibiting and Management (Internship at Heritage Park Fort McMurray)**
- Summer 2015
  - Cataloguing and preservation of accessioned materials, development of organisational system for artifacts.
- **Teaching Sunday school and Catechism**
- 2006-2014
  - Teaching of small children as well as teenagers
  - Adapting lessons from year to year in accordance with new teaching packets and changing diversity within the church.
- **Junior Curling Instructor (Fort McMurray Alberta- Little Rocks Program)**
- 2007-2009

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## MEMBERSHIPS

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Global Congress on Sport and Christianity	Present
(NASSH) North American Society of Sport History	2014-2015 2017-Present
(CHAPS) Cochrane Historical Archive and Preservation Society	2015-2016